WILD WEST WEEKLY

A MAGAZINE CONTAINING STORIES, SKETCHES Etc. OF WESTERN LIFE.

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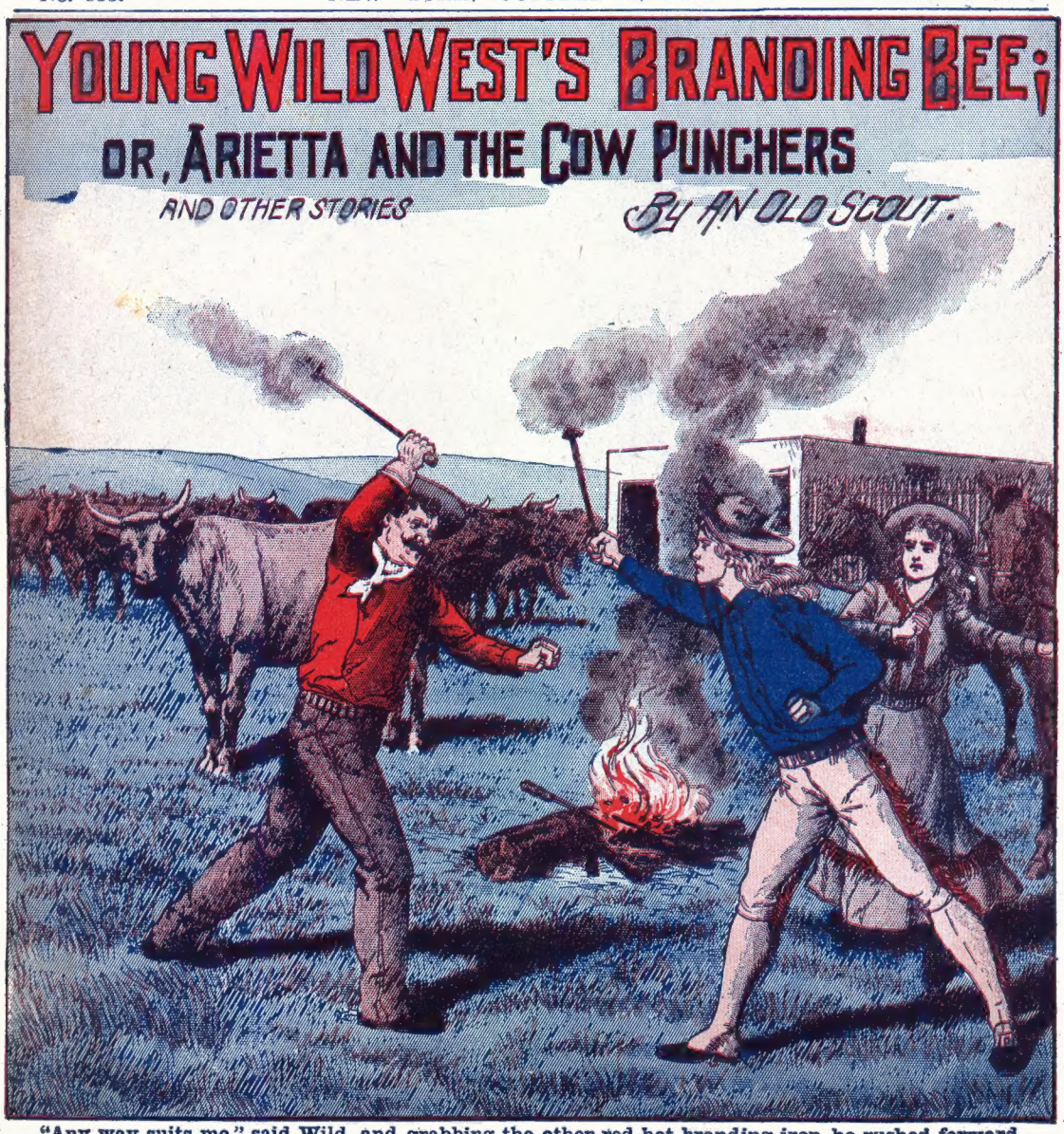
YOUNG WILD WEST'S BRANDING BEE;

OR, ARIETTA AND THE COW PUNCHERS

AND OTHER STORIES

BY AN OLD SCOUT.



"Any way suits me," said Wild, and grabbing the other red-hot branding iron, he rushed forward to meet the cow-puncher. "Someone's flesh is going to sizzle, but it won't be mine!" It was certainly a strange duel.

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Young Wild West's Branding Bee

—OR—

ARIETTA AND THE COWPUNCHERS

By AN OLD SCOUT

CHAPTER I.

WILD AND HIS PARTNERS MEET A JEWELRY DEALER.

Young Wild West had come down to his ranch in Texas for the purpose of superintending the branding of a big herd of cattle.

Buckhorn Ranch was the name of his Texas property, and, though he made little or no money form it since he had owned it, he kept it on account of its beautiful situation and warm climate in the winter.

To those who have never read of Young Wild West we will state that he was a true and brave American boy, who had been born and reared in the Wild West, and who had passed through many more thrilling adventures and hairbreadth escapes than usually falls to the lot of a dozen men of the West.

Probably this was due to the fact that the boy was always looking for a chance to do a good turn for somebody, and was ever ready to fight for those in the right and punish the guilty.

The boy had won the title of Champion Deadshot of the West, and he was always ready to defend it against all comers.

His friends sometimes spoke of him as the Prince of the Saddle, a nickname he had received some three years before, when he proved to be the only one of a score of experienced cowboys and scouts who could master a vicious sorrel stallion that had been lassoed on the plains.

Young Wild West mastered the stallion in twenty minutes, and since that time the steed had been as faithful to him as a horse possibly could.

Spitfire was the name he had given him, and when riding at full speed Young Wild West, with his long chestnut hair flying in the wind, and attired in a fancy hunting suit of buckskin, surely looked to be the Prince of the Saddle.

Added to his riding and shooting accomplishments, was the boy's good judgement, and his remarkable coolness under trying circumstances.

His two partners and almost inseparable companions, Cheyenne Charlie and Jim Dart, were true Westerners, too, and they were ready to act on the advice of the young deadshot.

Cheyenne Charlie was an ex-government scout and Indian fighter, and though he was ten years the senior of Wild he relied on the boy's judgment, never trusting to his own unless it was on account of the absence of our hero.

Charlie was tall and straight and very active. His complexion was rather dark and his black hair hung well over his shoulders, while he sported a heavy mustache, which when curled at the ends gave him a decidedly dashing appearance.

He was a splendid shot with the rifle or revolver and a horseman such as one might be proud to be.

His greatest failing was that he was rather hot-headed, though from being with our hero so long he had been partly cured of it.

Jim Dart was a boy of twenty, something on the same build as Young Wild West. Jim was a good shot, a fine rider and nothing lacking in bravery.

The two were fitting companions for the Champion Deadshot of the West, and the fact that they had never quarreled was sufficient to show how well they got along together.

It was a fine morning in April, and as Young Wild West and his two partners rode over the cattle range two miles north of Buckhorn Ranch they showed off to splendid advantage.

Their lithe forms really seemed to belong to the horses, so easy and graceful did they ride.

But there was something about Young Wild West's riding that was bound to attract the attention of a judge of horsemanship. He rode even easier than his partners. It made no difference whether his horse was walking, loping or galloping at the top of his speed—he answered every movement of the animal, just as though the two had been born to go together.

"Well, boys," he remarked, as he took off his broad sombrero and pushed back his hair, "I don't know how this branding be is going to take with the cow-punchers of the surrounding branches. Hoss Thompson says it is getting to be quite a custom down here, so I thought I would go ahead and let him invite those he saw fit to come over. Of course, it will cost more money to have the 'bee' than it would to brand the cattle in the regular way, but it is the fun the boys want. That goes with the branding, you know."

"I reckon there'll be a high old time of it," retorted Cheyenne Charlie. "We oughter have a whole lot of fun an' git ther work done quick, too. Ther only thing about it is that there'll most likely some reckless galoots come with ther cowboys, an' they'll try ter run things their own way an' make trouble."

"Oh, there is always good and bad men in every crowd, I suppose, but I hardly think there will be any trouble. I am going to see to it that they don't get drunk—at least, while they are doing the branding."

"I suppose there will be as many as sixty to come, according to what Hoss says," spoke up Jim Dart.

"Yes, and the ranchmen they work for are coming, too. They are anxious to get acquainted with us, so Thompson says," answered our hero.

"Well, it will be a week to-morrow since the invitations were sent out, an' as to-morrer is ther day set fur ther

brandin', I reckon they've all had plenty of time ter make up their minds whether ter come or not," said the scout.

"Oh, there is no doubt but that they will be here," Wild answered. "The majority of them will, anyhow."

"I wonder what that is comin' down ther trail?" Cheyenne Charlie said, suddenly, as he pointed toward the west and brought his horse to a halt.

"It is a buckboard drawn by two nags, and one of them is pretty lame," Wild answered, quickly.

"Yes, I know that. But who in thunder kin it be drivin' in ther outfit? Ther galoot has got on a plug hat."

"That is just as true as you live!" Jim exclaimed. "I guess we may as well ride over that way and see who it is."

"That's right. We haven't anything else to do just now," retorted Young Wild West. "Come on!"

The team of horses and the buckboard were at least two miles off, but they could be distinguished quite plainly, and so could the man driving.

In that part of the country one can see much further and clearer than in the East.

The atmosphere is different.

Our three friends turned their horses toward the lone traveler and set out at a swinging gallop.

It was still quite early in the morning, and they wondered how it was that the traveler was so far from a habitation at that time of the day.

There was only one place where he could have stopped over night, and that was at a village called Short Creek, which was about five miles from Buckhorn Ranch.

Wild and his partners concluded that he had set out from there a short time before and was following the trail to the different ranches that lay down that way.

They knew he was not a ranchman, for no ranchman was ever seen to wear a high hat.

If one had been reckless enough to put one on the chances are that his own cowboys would have selected it for a target right away and filled it full of holes.

Out in the West and Southwest the rough-and-ready natives are generally under the impression that a high hat, or even a Derby, needs ventilation.

And when they get through ventilating it there isn't much left of the piece of headgear.

"I reckon that galoot didn't wear that hat over in Short Creek," the scout observed, as they rapidly neared the team.

"Well, if he did he must have left before any one had a chance to see him," Dart answered with a laugh.

Young Wild West had been looking keenly at the man in the buckboard as they approached him.

He came to the conclusion that he was a peddler of some kind, for he could see that he had a couple of big grips and a trunk with him.

The trunk was tied behind the seat, and as the wagon bumped along over the bunches in the road it bounced up in a merry fashion.

The man driving was not a horseman, by any means.

He handled the reins like a six-year-old child, so the scout declared.

"Well," said our hero when he had sized him up, "he has got black scraggy whiskers, mixed with gray, and all his wearing apparel, that I can see from here, consists of a yellow linen duster and a high silk hat. He is a dandy, and no mistake!"

They all laughed, for if ever there was a curious-looking tenderfoot this man was one.

The man showed signs of pleasure when he saw the three riders bearing toward him.

In a very short time our friends were close enough to hail him.

"Hello, stranger!" Young Wild West called out. "You're lost in Texas, I reckon?"

"No, my friend, I am not lost in Texas, or anywhere in der vide vorld," was the quick reply. "I am home whereever I go. I am Isaac Rubenstein, der jewelry dealer."

"I thought he was a peddler of some sort," said Wild in a low tone. "Well, I don't know how good jewelry will sell in these parts, but I'll bet if any one can sell it that fellow can!"

They rode up to the buckboard and came to a halt.

"Whoa, dere!" cried the peddler, as he brought his bony team to a stop. "Vot you t'ink of mine fancy steppers, huh?"

"They're a fine team," answered our hero with a laugh. "So you are a jewelry peddler, eh?"

"Vell, call it dot if you like. I must be a peddler if I peddle, I subbose. But it vould sound petter to say I vos a dealer."

"All right. Make it a dealer, then. It don't make the least bit of difference to us."

"Vait till I show you somet'ings!"

With that the man let the reins drop and went at work at one of the grips.

He unlocked it and spread it open, showing a dazzling array of cheap jewelry.

"Look at dot, mine friends," he exclaimed, as he rolled his eyes in an ecstasy of delight and rubbed his hands. "Vot you t'ink of dot for diamonds and gold? Pick out vot you vant and I vill let you make your own price."

"Well, I don't know as I want any jewelry this morning," our hero retorted. "Where are you bound for, Mr. Rubenstein?"

"I vos drive to dot blace dey call Puckhorn Ranch."

"Is that so?"

Our friends looked at each other.

"Yes, I vos hear in El Paso three days ago dot dere vos be a large time here to-morrow. I vant to be dere to sell some jewelry, mine friends."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Charlie. "Ther galoot has heard about ther brandin' bee, I reckon. This is what I calls great!"

"Dot vos right, mine friend," the peddler said, nodding at the scout. "For your good guessing I vill make you a fine present of dis diamond pin. Let me put it on for you. If you vos puy it in El Paso it vould cost you sefen tollar; I gife it to you for notting, but you must told your friends on der ranch dot you vos bay me one tollar. Dere! dot vos fine!"

He had the pin fast in Charlie's red silk shirt before he hardly knew it.

"Now," went on the man in his business-like way, "I vos like to get to Puckhorn Ranch and find der man vot is der poss. I vill make him a handsome present, too."

"Well, you needn't look any further for the boss of Buckhorn Ranch, for here he is right here," spoke up Jim Dart, pointing to Wild.

"Is dot a fact?"

He looked at the daring young deadshot in surprise.

"Yes, I happen to be the owner of Buckhorn Ranch," said our hero, with a smile.

"You vos Young Vild Vest, den, mine friend?"

"Yes, I am Young Wild West."

"Vell, it is a great bleasure to meet you. Let me shake you py der hand vonce. Ah! vot a fine-looking young man you vos!"

Wild was amused at the cheeky way the peddler had.

It occurred to him that there could be no harm in allowing him to be present at the branding bee, so he told him he was welcome to go to Buckhorn Ranch.

Then the jeweler insisted in sticking a pin in his scarf that had a white stone in it as large as a chestnut.

"Dot vos a pure diamond, mine friend," the peddler assured him. "I vos a business man, and mine vord is good, Dot diamond vould cost you four hundred and fifty tollar in New York. Dere vos none like it for sale in El Paso."

"Well, I guess I don't want it if it is worth all that. You may give me one that is worth a dollar, if you like. Expensive jewelry is not exactly to my liking, for it might incite some one to rob me. I never like to be the means of tempting any one to steal, you know."

The jeweler nodded and smiled.

"Anyt'ing to blease you," he said.

Then he gave Wild and Jim each a pin like Charlie's and shut up his grip.

"You vos go to Puckhorn Ranch, huh?" he asked.

"Yes, we are going right there now," was our hero's reply. "You can ride along with us if you like. You stopepd at Short Creek over night, I suppose?"

"Yes, I vos' stop in der tavern dere."

"Did yer wear that high hat there?" the scout inquired.

"No. I vos put dot hat on after I left dere. I vanted to make me look like a real jewelry dealer when I go to Young Vild Vest's ranch. I vos hear dot he was a great pusiness feller, and I pelieve in making a good imbression."

"Well, you have made it all right," retorted Wild, with a laugh. "You are about the greatest fellow I ever struck. I don't know how you will make out selling your jewelry, but it seems to me that there ought to be a whole lot of fun in you."

"Dere was blenty of fun mit me," said the peddler. "I vos

let a horse kick me if der owner vos puy ten tollar vorth of jewelry. Pizziness is pizziness, mine friends."

Wild and his partners turned their horses down the trail and then they went trotting along with the horses of the peddler, who seemed to be highly pleased at what had transpired.

Cheyenne Charlie kept looking at the high hat and grinning.

He placed his hand on the butt of a six-shooter two or three times, but did not draw it.

Our hero knew what was running through his mind.

Pretty soon he said:

"Wait till we get to the ranch, Charlie. Then we'll give Mr. Isaac Rubenstein a good old-fashioned reception."

"All right," was the reply.

They soon got to the ranch, which was very prettily situated on the bank of the Rio Grande.

Two young girls of seventeen or eighteen and a young woman of twenty-five were seated on the veranda when they rode up and came to a halt.

"Now, boys, just show how to treat a high silk hat!" exclaimed Young Wild West, pulling a revolver from his belt.

CHAPTER II.

RUBENSTEIN AND THE CHINAMAN.

The words were scarcely out of our hero's mouth when three pistol shots rang out.

Just that many bullets went through the jewelry peddler's high hat, too, but instead of letting out a yell and falling over backward, he nodded and smiled pleasantly.

"Dot vos a fine salute, mine friends," he said, rubbing his hands and bowing politely. "I vos expecting it pefore. Der hat needs ventilation, so I vos glad you shoot it. I haf peen dere pefore already."

"Good!" cried Young Wild West. "That is the first time I have made a mistake in my man in a long time. Isaac Rubenstein, you are all right!"

"Whoopee! Whoopee!" yelled Cheyenne Charlie, throwing his hat in the air. "What do yer think of that fur an innocent? I'll bet he's a good match fur Hop Wah."

"Who have you brought over, Wild?" asked one of the girls, as she stepped from the veranda and walked over to the young deadshot, as he was in the act of dismounting.

"It is Isaac Rubenstein, the dealer in jewelry, Et," was the reply. "He rather fooled me, I must say."

"I see. You thought he would be half scared to death when you put the holes in his hat. Well, he says he has been there before, and I guess he has."

The girl laughed in a silvery note and looked at those she had left sitting on the veranda.

They were laughing, too. They could not help it, for the dealer in jewelry was evidently trying to make himself appear as comical as he could.

Arietta Murdock was the girl who had spoken to Young Wild West.

The other girls were Anna, the wife of Charlie, and Eloise Gardner, the sweetheart of Jim Dart.

Of course, Arietta was Wild's sweetheart.

He had saved her from the clutches of a hostile band of Sioux before he was acquainted with her, and since that time they had been regarded as lovers by their friends.

"How would you like to try a shot at Mr. Rubenstein's hat, Et?" the dashing young deadshot remarked.

"Well, if he tosses it up I will guarantee to put two more bulletholes in it before it touches the ground," she replied.

For the first time the stranger showed signs of being astonished.

"Vot you say, miss?" he asked, looking at her as though he had not exactly caught her words.

"I said I would put two more holes in your hat before it touched the ground if you threw it up for me to shoot at," she answered.

"Shimminy Moses! I vould like to see dot."

Wild handed the girl one of the revolvers he carried.

Rubenstein took off his hat and looked doubtingly at her.

"You vos surbrise me if you do vot you say, miss," he observed.

"Well, a little surprise won't hurt you any, I guess," was the retort.

The peddler took another look at her, and, seeing that she meant business, he let his hat go in the air.

Crack!

Crack!

Arietta fired twice, the reports sounding so close together that it almost seemed impossible for her to do it.

"I guess I did it," she said, calmly, as the hat struck the ground.

"Chimminy Moses!" cried Rubenstein, leaping out of the wagon.

He picked up his headgear and quickly counted the holes in the crown.

Five bullets had passed through it, beyond the question of a doubt.

The peddler shook his head approvingly.

"Dot vos great shooting," he said; "you shall hafe a diamond pin for dot!"

Then he quickly opened one of the traveling bags and displayed his stock in trade.

Arietta walked over to have a look, while Anna and Eloise came off the porch in a hurry.

Trinkets will attract the attention of females, especially when they are not in the habit of seeing much of them.

But the girls knew that the stuff was good for nothing the moment their eyes rested upon the lot.

Arietta looked at Wild and laughed.

"What in the world did you bring him here for?" she asked.

"He wants to have the privilege of selling his wares at the branding bee to-morrow," was the reply. "I gave it to him. It may be that some of the cowboys will want jewelry, you know."

"Well, I see that you folks are wearing some now."

She looked at Wild and Charlie's pins.

"Jim has one, too. They are supposed to be genuine diamonds."

"Supposed to be?"

"Yes. That's what the peddler says."

"Not peddler, but dealer, mine friend," corrected the jeweler, who was listening.

"Excuse me—the dealer, I mean."

There was a merry laugh at this.

"Now," said Wild, turning to Rubenstein, "if you take your rig over to the shed you see there you can leave your buckboard there and put up your horses."

"Thank you, mine good friend. I vill do dot."

Then he led the team to the shed, which was in plain view of the veranda, and our friends took seats, leaving their horses stand under the trees near at hand.

Wild called the man who looked after things around the house and told him to go and see that the peddler's horses were taken care of.

"He is the first guest to arrive for the branding bee," he said to his companions, "so we may as well make him as comfortable as possible."

When he had been taken care of properly Rubenstein came over to the veranda, carrying a grip with him.

"I subbose dot der odder bag and der trunk will be safe mit der wagon?" he said, questioningly.

"Well, I don't know about that. If the men working on the ranch hear that there are several million dollars worth of diamonds in that old buckboard they might be tempted to steal some of them," our hero answered.

The peddler grinned.

Then he moved a bench that was under the trees near the stoop close to where they were sitting and opened the grip.

"I hafe not bresented der smart young lady with der diamond pin yet," he said. "I vill now do it."

He selected a neat-looking stone that was set rather prettily and handed it to Arietta.

"Take it, Et," said Wild; "he has plenty of them."

As the girl took the piece of cheap jewelry and thanked him, Rubenstein selected two more just like it and passed them to Charlie's wife and Eloise.

Just then a piping shrill voice was heard from around the corner of the house singing something that went like this:

"Me name Hop Wah; comee flom Pekin;
Me havee Injun gal for um wife.
Me catche gleaser alound her sneakin'
Cuttee uppee with um blamed big knife!"

As the last words sounded a typical Chinaman appeared around the corner of the house.

He did not proceed with his song, but looked at the peddler in surprise.

"What is the matter, Hop?" Wild asked the Celestial. "Anything gone wrong?"

"No, Mister Wild," was the reply. "Silver Fawn, my wifee-squaw, she say she no go 'way flom Buckhorn Ranch de next timee me go; she go to stay and helpee Missus Thompson. Me t'inkee maybe Gleaser Mike maybe so be tly makee foolish with um squaw when me no here allee samee."

"You thought that, and then you made up a little song to express your thoughts; is that it?"

"Lat light, Misler Wild," and the Chinaman grinned rather sheepishly.

The faces of all hands wore smiles, including Rubenstein.

Hop Wah was one of the servants of Young Wild West and his friends.

While he looked just like a common, every-day Chinaman, he was something more than that.

He was, to be brief about it, a good sleight-of-hand performer, an all-around gambler and one who liked a little spree now and then.

Added to this, he could steal articles that he had no earthly use for and tell lies just as easy.

But, in spite of all this, he was a good reliable servant, and as he had once saved the life of our hero, besides helping them all out of dangerous places at various times, it was quite likely that he would remain in the employ of Young Wild West as long as he wished to.

There was lots of fun to be had out of Hop, as might be supposed.

Sometimes he made fun for our friends when they did not expect it, but he was always ready when they asked him.

Hop was not in anything like the bad humor the verse he had been singing would indicate.

On the contrary, he was looking for a chance to do something to make Young Wild West and his companions laugh.

And the moment his eyes lighted upon the peddler he thought he need not look any further for a subject.

"Me go fishee!" he suddenly said, and then he darted around the house as though he had been shot.

"Der Shinee vos in a pig hurry," observed Isaac Rubenstein; "I vos yust gid ready to sell him some fine diamonds."

"I reckon he'll be back right away," spoke up the scout, who could tell by the way he acted that he was too much interested in the display of cheap trash to leave for good.

He was right, too, for a couple of minutes later Hop came around, carrying a fishing pole.

"My friend," said Rubenstein, "let me show you vot a fine lot of costly jewelry I vos have for sale."

"Velly nicee," remarked Hop, as he took the card of pins the man handed over; "how muchee?"

"I sell you von of dose pins for t'ree tollar. If you vos puy it in der city it vould cost you elefen."

While he was looking at the card the Chinaman let the line run out from the end of the pole a few feet.

Somehow the hook dropped right into the open grip of the peddler.

Our friends saw this, but Rubenstein did not.

Neither did Hop, apparently.

"Me no likee," he said, suddenly, as he handed back the card. "Hip hi! me gottee bite!"

Fast to the hook was a bunch of brass watch-chains and some other jewelry.

"Here!" cried Rubenstein, excitedly. "Vot you do, mine Shinee friend?"

"Me catchee fishee," answered the Celestial, innocently, and not looking at what he had on the hook at all; "me go down to um liver and fishee."

Then he raised the pole, so the jewelry was swinging about six feet from the ground, and made out that he was in a hurry to get to the river.

Wild walked to the end of the veranda and called Hop back.

Then the Chinaman looked at what was dangling fast to the hook and showed signs of great surprise.

"Velly funny," he muttered, loud enough for them all to hear.

"Yah! dot vos very funny, hey?" exclaimed Isaac. "I vos dink you vos a putty smart Shinee, mine friend."

Hop put on a sad look and shook his head.

"Show the dealer in jewelry one of your magic tricks, Hop," Jim Dart suggested

"Allee light," was the quick reply, and then out came his big yellow silk handkerchief. "You lettee me havee watchee," he added, looking at Rubenstein.

The jeweler shook his head in the negative.

"Let him have it," spoke up Wild. "I will be responsible for it."

"Fery vell, I vill let him hafe one of der gold vatches I hafe for sale."

He fished out a big brass watch from the grip, wound it up and set it by the one he carried in his pocket, and then handed it over to Hop.

The Chinaman carefully wrapped the watch in the handkerchief.

Then, before he could proceed with his trick, a series of yells sounded and a dozen reckless-looking horsemen came dashing toward the house.

"We're ther Boss Cow-Punchers of Texas!" shouted the leader, as he dashed up and reined in his foaming steed. "We're all ther way from Reynolds' Ranch, an' we're goin' ter be at Young Wild West's Brandin' Bee to-morrer! Blow ther dust out of your lungs, boys! Whoop, whoopee!"

Then a yell went up from the bunch that awoke the echoes and made the peddler place his fingers in his ears. Then they fired a volley from their revolvers and began making their horses prance around on their hind legs.

CHAPTER III.

THE BRANDING BEE BEGINS.

The cow-punchers were certainly a reckless lot.

They had been drinking some, and by the way they acted they did not care much what they did.

After firing a volley of pistol shots and making their horses do some cutting up they turned their attention to the peddler.

Fortunately the man had not put his hat back on his head after Arietta had done shooting at it.

The leader was a young, swarthy-faced fellow, who looked to be quick and muscular.

"Here's a galoot from Jerusalem, boys!" he roared out. "Rope him!"

Almost in a twinkling a dozen lariats were being whirled in the air.

Isaac Rubenstein got up and started to run.

Whiz—whiz!

He was caught in a jiffy.

Not until then did Young Wild West offer to interfere.

"Let that man go!" he cried out in a ringing tone of voice. "Don't go too far, strangers!"

All but the leader let their ropes slacken.

He had caught the peddler about the neck and he held right on.

Crack!

Wild whipped out his revolver and fired and the lariat was cut close to the cow-puncher's hands.

"Thunder!" he cried, as he settled back in the saddle suddenly; "I reckon you must be Young Wild West."

"You've got that right, stranger," answered the young deadshot, coolly.

"Well, I'm ther leader of ther Boss Cow-Punchers of Texas, an' my name are Game Glenn. It might be that you've heard of me?"

"No, I never did."

"Well, you'll have a chance ter know me better to-morrer, fur I'm comin' ter your brandin' bee with my gang. We're goin' ter have a red-hot time, too. Hope you'll excuse us fur what jest happened; we only done it fur a little fun."

"All right. You're excused."

"We was headin' straight fur Short Creek, but when we seen ther ranch was so close to ther road we thought we'd ride down an' let yer know that we was comin' to-morrer."

Wild nodded.

While he did not particularly like the looks of the gang, he meant to treat them fair.

He knew only too well that Gabe Glen did not like him for shooting his lariat in two.

That was easy enough to see by studying his countenance as he talked.

But it made little difference to our hero whether the man liked him or not.

He was no more afraid to meet a foe than he was a friend.

Glenn gave the word and then the cow-punchers turned their horses and rode away for the trail at the top of their horses' speed, yelling like mad as they did so.

"Shimminy Moses!" exclaimed Rubenstein, as he came back to the bench where his grip was. "Dose vos pad fellers all right."

"Oh, they soon got tamed, though," Wild answered, smiling at him, for he could see that the peddler was worried somewhat.

"You vos make dem stop puddy quick. Shimminy Moses. Vot a vonderful shooter you vos! You cut dot rope mit a bullet yust like I vos do it mit a knife."

"Well, that is nothing. Almost any of the men in this part of the country can do such things as that."

The jeweler shook his head.

"I vos not believe dot, mine friend," he said slowly. "I vould not say you vos lie, understand, but I can't make me believe dot. I am von dealer in jewelry and diamonds, but I hafe seen and read much. Not many mans vos cut a rope mit der pullet from a bistol."

"You are right, Mr. Rubinstein," spoke up Cheyenne Charlie's wife. "Young Wild West is the Champion Deadshot of the West. He can shoot quicker and straighter than any other person living."

"I know dot," was the reply.

"Well, never mind about that," said Wild. "I guess Hop had better proceed with the magic trick he was doing when the cow-punchers came along and interrupted us."

"Shimminy Moses! dot vos so!" exclaimed Isaac. "Vot der Shinee vos do mit der elegant eighteen-carat gold vatch I vos let him hafe?"

Hop had taken a back seat when the rough and ready riders dashed up.

Experience had taught him that a Celestial was not always exactly safe where such a boisterous gang was.

He now came forward smiling blandly.

In order to show that he was not trying to work any deception on the lookers-on, he took the watch from the handkerchief and held it up so they could all see it.

Then he carefully wrapped it up again and handed it to the peddler.

"You holdee velly still," he said; "me makee velly nicee tlick.'

Rubenstein placed the handkerchief to his ear and plainly heard the tick of the watch.

But it might have been that the ticking sounds came from Hop's sleeve, for that was placed right close to his ear, too.

"I vos sure dot der vatch vos der handkerchief in," said he.

"Holdee uppee over um head," said Hop.

The command was obeyed.

Then the Chinaman began singing a sort of a chant and making mysterious motions with his hands.

Suddenly he stopped, and, pointing his index finger at the peddler, exclaimed:

"Watchee not in um handkerchief! Watchee gone to China!"

Rubenstein shook his head.

"I vos too smart for dot," he answered. "You vos no fool me; I have seen plenty tricks played already."

"Opee um handelkerchief."

With a smile the peddler obeyed.

Then he found, to his astonishment, that the handkerchief contained a piece of potato, instead of the watch.

The vegetable had been cut to something like the size and shape of the time-piece and had served to fool the jeweler.

Rubenstein shook his head again.

"I vos pe fooled already. Shimminy Moses!" he exclaimed.

"Velly nicee lillee tlick," observed Hop, with a bland smile.

"Yaw!"

"Me havee go and do lillee workee now," and, picking up his fishing pole, the Chinaman started to go around the house.

"Hold on, Hop!" spoke up Wild. "You forget that I went good for that watch, I guess."

"Me velly muchee forgittee," was the reply, and then he walked over to the bench and apparently took it out from under it.

The peddler grabbed the watch and pressed it to his ear to see if it was going.

It was.

"I have no more fooling mit der Shinee," he said, as he put the time-piece away. "I vos putty smart, but I vos beated, py shimminy Moses!"

Hop walked away and the peddler soon hied to where his buckboard wagon was.

He had been stumped pretty hard that morning, and it was probable he was thinking up a good programme by which he might dispose of his wares on the morrow."

Young Wild West spent the balance of the day quietly at Buckhorn Ranch.

Preparations for the branding bee had all been made when night came.

Just before dark a ranchman and his family drove over and were welcomed in true Texas fashion.

They had been compelled to start early in the morning in order to get there.

Before nine o'clock several more put in appearance.

They were well fed and made comfortable for the night.

The cowboys did not begin to arrive until the following morning.

Then they rode in to the ranch in bands of six and seven, and in some cases as many as a dozen.

The cow-punchers under the lead of Gabe Glenn were the last lot to arrive.

They came about nine o'clock.

They were filled up pretty well with bad whisky, too, and they were very noisy when they reached the corral.

The corral was located in the open prairie about a mile from the ranch house.

Wild's mark was "Y. W. W.," and he had several branding irons ready.

A large number of the yearlings were to be branded that day.

Fires were started at various points near the corral, so they could heat the irons and keep them hot.

Near the flat-roofed shanty at the gate of the corral a fat ox was roasting.

This was to feed those who had come over to take part in the "bee."

Of course there had to be whisky there, for the cowboys and cow-punchers would not have been satisfied without it.

Wild's trusted foreman, Hoss Thompson, was in charge of this, and he had orders to shut down when he saw that the men were getting more than was good for them.

At a function of this sort there is generally as much fun as there is work.

But there being so many to do the work, it could be finished in a day easily.

The brands were heated and the work began.

As fast as the cattle were marked with Wild's initials they were turned into another pen.

The girls rode out from the ranch on horseback to watch the proceedings.

It was quite natural that Wild and his two partners should keep near them.

They were taking no part in the branding, other than superintending the work.

Things went along quite smoothly until noon, though the cow-punching gang now and then had showed themselves slightly quarrelsome.

Those in charge of the roasting ox had given it out that it would be done at about two o'clock.

It was just a little after noon when a fight started.

One of the cow-punchers and a cowboy belonging to Buckhorn Ranch got into an altercation and the result was that the Buckhorn cowboy received a bullet in the calf of his leg, which laid him up for repairs.

Wild got to the scene in time to prevent further bloodshed.

He argued with his men and got them to stop hostilities.

Then he turned to the man who had fired the shot and said:

"You have got just ten minutes to get out of sight!"

The fellow, who was ruffianly-looking, turned to Gabe Glenn, who was standing near.

"What'll I do about it?" he asked.

The leaders of the Boss Cow-Catchers of Texas shrugged his shoulders.

"I don't think it was your fault," he answered.

"Well, I do!" exclaimed our hero, his eyes flashing. "I made inquiries and found that your friend was all to blame. Now he has got to vamoose the ranch, or else get his ears shot off close to his head! Do you hear what I say?"

"Oh! I hear yer all right, Young Wild West," was the

retort. "But yer oughter give ther feller a chance ter git somethin' ter eat afore he goes."

"He has got to go right now!"

Young Wild West pulled a revolver from his belt.

"I'll go," said the cow-puncher, quickly. "But it ain't a square deal that I'm gittin'."

"Never mind, Jake," spoke up Gabe Glenn; "this is Young Wild West's ranch, an' I s'pose he's runnin' things here."

Without another word, the man called Jake went and got his broncho and rode away.

Glenn walked over to a little fire near at hand, and, picking up one of the hot irons, remarked to one of his companions:

"I'll brand Young Wild West afore I leave here; see if I don't! I don't like the galoot, anyhow!"

Jim Dart happened to be near enough to catch the words.

"What is that you say?" he demanded, stepping forward.

"Nothin' fur you ter hear," was the reply. "I was talkin' ter a friend; that's all."

Wild noticed that Jim was talking angrily to Glenn, so he hurried over to see what it was about.

He soon found out, for Jim did not hesitate to tell him what the cow-puncher had said.

"So you are going to brand me before you go away, are you, Gabe Glenn?" he exclaimed. "Well, you must do it now, then, or you will never get another chance!"

CHAPTER IV.

THE DUEL WITH RED-HOT BRANDING-IRONS.

Gabe Glenn was not a coward, though he really was of a very villainous nature.

He really felt that he could master Young Wild West, notwithstanding the stories he had heard about him.

He was remarkably cool, too, and, placing the iron back in the fire, he folded his arms and said:

"I talked a little too loud, I reckon, but I want yer ter understand, Young Wild West, that I ain't afraid of you, nor no other galoot livin'!"

"I don't want you to be afraid of me, Glenn," was the calm retort. "But I do want you to brand me if you can, and do it right now! Do you hear me?"

"I sartinly hears yer, Young Wild West. I'll brand yer all right, but I want yer ter have ther chance ter do ther same ter me. I ain't no sneakin' coyote, an' I believes in a square deal every time. Pick up one of them red-hot irons an' come fur me!"

He seized one of the branding irons as he spoke and stood on the defensive.

"Any way suits me," said Wild, and, grabbing the other red-hot branding iron, he rushed forward to meet the cow-puncher. "Some one's flesh is going to sizzle, but it won't be mine!"

It was certainly a strange duel.

Arietta ran over to the scene, but not a word did she utter.

She knew that Wild thoroughly understood his business, so she merely wanted to look on.

That he would be the victor in the curious duel she did not doubt.

The cowboys gathered around in a hurry, leaving a good-sized ring for the two combatants.

Gabe Glenn was certainly a powerful man.

He was strong and active, too, and when he made a sudden thrust with the hot iron it looked to some as though he had touched Young Wild West's cheek with it.

But not so.

Our hero knew his business too well to allow that.

He was versed in all sorts of fighting, and it was easy for him to dodge the thrust.

Then he stepped nimbly from one side to the other and feinted at his opponent's bared arm.

Glenn tried to protect himself with his iron, and then——"

Zip!

Wild drew the red-hot branding iron across his cheek and left a livid streak.

The cow-puncher uttered a cry of anger as he felt the burn, and then he struck at our hero viciously.

Zip!

Another quick stroke and Wild made a cross on his cheek.

Then, as Glenn came for him savagely, he swung his iron and struck the villain on the wrist, not only burning him, but knocking the branding iron from his hand.

The leader of the gang of cow-punchers uttered a yell of pain, and, then staggering back a few steps, dropped to the ground and sat there.

"I guess you know who got branded now, Glenn," said Wild, calmly. "You have got a mark on your cheek that you will carry to your grave, most likely, and it is all your own fault. Now, what are you going to do, stay here and behave yourself or light out?"

"You beat me fair," was the reply. "I reckon I'll stay a while. I'll want some of that roast ox afore I go."

It cost him a great effort to say this, and our hero knew it.

The fact was that the cow-puncher was fairly boiling over with rage, and that he would be looking for revenge before he went away was quite certain.

"All right,' our hero remarked, as he tossed the iron into the fire.

Glenn got up and walked over to where the ox was being roasted.

He nursed his injured wrist as he went.

It was evident that he would do no branding of cattle that day.

Half a dozen friends gathered about him as he sat down on the ground and leaned against the corral fence.

"You got it good an' hard, Gabe," said one sympathizer, speaking in a low tone.

"I reckon I did," was the reply. "It sorter sobered me up, too. But I ain't done yet!"

"Don't talk too loud, or some one will hear yer, an' go an' tell Young Wild West ag'in," cautioned another.

"I'm marked fur life!" said the defeated cow-puncher, after a short pause.

"Yes," two or three admitted.

"Well, I'll either git square on Young Wild West afore this brandin' bee is over, or go under."

Again he was cautioned not to speak so loud.

But it so happened that no one but the men belonging to the gang were near enough to hear them.

Those about the roasting ox were doing very much talking, and the sound of the sizzling meat drowned anything they might be saying.

"That gal over there by Young Wild West is one of ther puttiest females I ever seen," went on Glenn. "I'll bet he thinks an awful lot of her, an' intends ter marry her some day, most likely. Do yer know what I'm goin' ter try an' do, boys?"

"What?" came the question.

"I'm goin' ter marry that gal myself!"

His hearers looked surprised.

"How in thunder kin yer do it, Gabe?" one asked.

"Catch her an' ride off with her when I git ready ter leave here."

"An' where are yer goin' ter take her?"

"To ther deserted ranch we passed ten mile ther other side of ther railroad track yisterday."

"Won't they chase yer there an' git her away from yer?" queried one of the men, who seemed to have his doubts about such a plan being carried out.

"How will they know we went that way? Can't we ride north ter ther railroad track, an' then foller it along till we git ter a good place ter strike out fur this old tumble-down ranch, instead of follerin' ther road that leads ter Reynolds' place? Well, I reckon so. I want you all to stick ter me, that's all. I've got ter have revenge on Young Wild West, an' stealin' his gal will be about ther best way ter do it. That'll hurt him, I kin tell yer!"

Those present declared they would stick to him, no matter what happened.

Gabe Glenn rubbed his injured wrist a little and nodded in a pleased way.

"Jest let ther rest of the gang know about it on ther quiet," he said, as he arose to his feet. "This stealin' ther gal has got ter be done so no one will know anything about it until after it happens, yer know. We've got ter git a good start of 'em, 'cause if they knowed it right away they'd be sure ter catch us, an' then lead would fly fur fair. I'll be ther one ter take ther gal an' go on ahead. But I want yer all ter help git things right so's I kin do it when ther time comes. I'll let yer know my plans after we git our grub. Now you fellers kin go on an' help with ther brandin'. I've got a blamed sore wrist an' a cheek that's doin' some al-

mighty smartin'. I've got excuse fur not workin', an' while I ain't workin' I'll be doin' some tall thinkin'."

The fun and work went on.

There was nothing to occur in the way of a disturbance, and finally the ox was pronounced to be done.

Then all hands quit and made for the scene.

Bread had been brought over from the ranch in large quantities, and there was plenty of good fresh milk there for those who wanted it.

But the majority of the cowboys wanted the meat and bread to eat and tanglefoot whisky to drink.

For some reason Isaac Rubenstein did not show up until now.

Evidently he thought it a bad time to try and sell his goods while the men were at work.

The branding was pretty nearly finished by this time, anyhow, and when he drove out with his buckboard a yell went up from the cowboys.

The jeweler had been wise enough not to wear his high hat.

He had put on a broad slouch that one of the cowboys belonging to the ranch had loaned him.

He opened up business right away, and it was not long before he was taking in money in a way that suited him.

The cow-punchers went for the cheap jewelry for fair.

Some of them had sweethearts located somewhere, and they felt that they ought to buy presents for them.

Young Wild West was surprised when he saw that the peddler was making out so well.

He cautioned him not to overcharge them too much.

The dinner, as they called it, lasted an hour and a half, and it was during that time that Rubenstein got in his work.

He ate some of the roast ox, as a matter of course, and when whisky and milk was offered him he took both.

"I vos like goot sweet milluk and plenty of visky," he told Cheyenne Charlie.

"All right," replied the scout; "jest keep sober, so yer won't lose ther money you've took in."

"Leave dot to me, mine friend. I nefer gets so drunk dot I can't tend to my pizziness."

Jim had made it his special business to keep an eye on the leader of the cow-punchers.

He knew the villain was pretty sore, and that he was just aching for revenge he felt sure.

But he saw nothing going on that indicated that Glenn was up to anything.

After the dinner was over the crowd began indulging in various cowboy feats.

They did fancy riding, shot at hats that were thrown up for them and enjoyed themselves in other ways.

Some of the Boss Cow-Punchers of Texas, as they had named themselves, took part, too.

They seemed to be all right, as far as our friends could see.

Wild and his partners sat near the stockade gate with the girls.

They had enjoyed the whole thing immensely.

True, the branding of the cattle might seem a little cruel, but it was all over in a minute, and, besides, it was a necessity.

The barbecue was just the thing, the girls thought, and they liked to look at the hungry men eat.

While they were sitting there who should come walking up but Gabe Glenn.

There was a blister on his cheek in the shape of a cross, and he held his right arm close to his breast.

The villain had been some time in getting himself in shape to say something that would throw our friends off their guard.

Now he thought he was just right to do it.

He took off his hat and bowed politely, and then said:

"Young Wild West, I want ter tell yer that I don't bear yer ther least bit of grudge."

"Well, I am glad of that," answered Wild, though he did not believe him.

"I had it in my head that you wasn't half what they said yer was, an' after yer shot my lariat in two yisterday I made up my mind that I was goin' ter try yer out ther first chance I got an' see what yer was made of. I tried yer, an' I've found out that you're all wool an' a yard wide."

"All right, Glenn," said Wild. "You know as well as I do that it was all your own fault that you got burned. You wanted to touch me up a little, and I guess you meant to give it to me pretty good, too. But I wouldn't let you, or anybody else, burn me with a red-hot branding iron—not while I had a chance to keep you from doing it."

"I've been thinkin' it all over," went on the cow-puncher. "It was right fur yer ter send Jake away, an' it was wrong fur me ter git mad an' say what I did. Of course I didn't want yer ter hear it, but when I found that yer did I wasn't goin' ter squeal. I fought yer a queer sort of a duel, I reckon, but never once did I have a show while it lasted."

"Your talk seems to be pretty straight, Glenn," our hero remarked as he looked him keenly in the face. "If you mean what you say there is the making of a good man in you. If you are trying to deceive me you are making the mistake of your life, because when I find a man is trying to do that he and I generally fall out pretty quick, and sometimes he falls so hard that he don't get up again."

"There ain't nothin' like that in my case," answered Glenn. "I've got a putty good reputation over at Reynolds' Ranch. I've worked there nigh three years, an' I don't know as any one kin say that I was ever much of a liar."

"All right, Glenn. I shan't look up your standing. You just act the part of a man while you're at this branding bee of mine, and you'll be all right."

The villainous cow-puncher walked away, satisfied that he had made our hero and his friends believe that he bore them no grudge.

But he was wrong when he thought that way.

All of our friends mistrusted him, and they meant to watch his movements closely.

CHAPTER V.

HOP'S WONDERFUL TRICK, AND WHAT FOLLOWED.

Young Wild West thought it would not be a bad idea to have Hop Wah perform a few of his magic tricks for the benefit of those participating in the "bee," so he sent Jim Dart after him.

It was only a mile to the house, but Jim rode his horse, of course.

A real Westerner never likes to walk if he can help it.

When Jim rode up to the house there was no one to be seen around.

Hoss Thompson and his wife had gone over to the branding, and they had left the servants in charge.

Hop was one of the visiting servants, but as he was paid by the month by Wild, he was compelled to do a little work every day.

Jim got a little bit curious when he saw that there was such an air of solitude about the house.

He dismounted and stepped to the front door.

It was open, as it always was during the day.

The boy stepped inside and looked into the sitting room.

In an easy chair reclined the squaw who assisted with the general work, asleep.

That was all right, Jim thought. If she had finished her work she had a perfect right to take a nap.

He went through the hall and turned into the kitchen.

There was no one there.

But as he went to the door of the kitchen he heard the sounds of low voices outside.

He looked cautiously outside and beheld an amusing sight.

Under a tree was a bench, and seated straddle upon it, facing each other, were Hop, the Chinaman, and the peon who did the chores.

Mike was the latter's name, and he was about the laziest Mexican that ever breathed the fresh air that blew from the prairies, which is saying a great deal.

He had a mania for gambling, and, though he always lost when he played with the Chinaman, the lesson was never remembered.

Jim stepped softly from the kitchen and sat down behind a tree not far from the two.

He could not resist the temptation to spy upon them and listen to them as the game progressed.

It seemed that it was a game that the Mexican had invented himself, and as he was losing, he could not quite understand it.

It was played with ten cards that were selected at random from the pack and placed between the players.

Each placed ten cents on the board and then they would each guess a card and turn one over.

The first to turn the right one would take the pot, and

in case neither of them guessed right they would have to put an extra dime in the pot.

Then they would keep on until all the ten cards were turned over, thus making it a game of memory more than anything else.

Mike thought he had a wonderful memory.

But it was not to be compared to that of Hop.

They had just finished one round of the game and Hop had won more from good luck than anything else.

The fact was that the Chinaman had been unable to think of a way by which he might cheat in the new game the peon had introduced.

The way it was there happened to be only one card among the ten that had been guessed, and Hop had been the lucky one.

It brought him in a dollar and ten cents, and he was raking in the pot when Jim took his place behind the tree close by them.

"Whattee cards you takee now?" asked the Chinaman, as he picked them up and shuffled them in an offhand way.

He was really counting them and placing certain ones just where he would know them, but Mike was too dumb to see it.

"Taka da same cards," he answered. "Me a-win his a-time."

"Me likee see Mike win evely lillee while," said the Chinaman, and he smiled and nodded just as though he meant every word of it.

He laid the cards on the bench and then placed a dime near them.

The peon put down a similar amount.

"You guessee," said the Celestial.

Mike did so, but when he turned the card over he found he had made a miss.

He put down another ten cents.

"Me say lis card allee samee king of clubs," said Hop, placing his finger on the top card.

He turned it over, and sure enough it was.

He took twenty cents from the board, leaving up his stakes.

Then Mike was forced to ante up.

It was his chance now, and he missed again and put up another ten cents.

Hop knew just what the next card was.

He guessed it correctly and won ten.

Then he had to go along haphazard until the last card.

He knew what that one was.

Mike won the next time and his swarthy face lighted up.

Then it went on with neither of them winning until it came to the last card.

Hop got it, of course, and he smiled serenely as he raked in the money.

"What kind of a game do you call that, anyway?"

It was Jim Dart who spoke.

He had risen from behind the tree and he stood looking at the two gamblers with folded arms.

"Me maka new a-game, but no t'ink a-much of da game."

"Haven't you been told not to play games for money with Hop?" said Dart in a severe tone of voice.

"Me a-no t'ink da Chinee a-win in da new game."

"But you found out different, didn't you?"

"Oh, he a-no win a-verra much."

Mike seemed to be satisfied on that point, anyhow.

"Hop, Wild wants you to come out on the prairie and perform a few of your tricks," Jim said to the Chinaman.

"Allee light, Misler Jim," was the quick retort; "me makee velly nicee magic tlicks."

"Well, that is what you want to do. Now just fill your pockets full of live pigeons, eggs and what other stuff you want to work with. You must puzzle the cowboys all you can."

"Me fixee allee light."

In a few minutes Hop was ready to go, and then mounting the piebald mule he sometimes rode, he went off at Dart's side, waving a mock farewell to the peon.

The two soon got there.

It so happened that Wild gave it out that there was going to be a performance of magic pretty soon, and as the branding was nearly done he thought it would be all right to have a little intermission.

The cowboys, including the rascally gang of cow-punchers, were formed in a semi-circle near the west side of the big cattle pen.

Those belonging to Buckhorn Ranch knew considerable about Hop's wonderful abilities in the magic line, and they had given it out among the rest.

The consequence was that there was a great deal of interest manifested when the Chinaman rode up and dismounted.

Gabe Glenn and his gang had managed to get together where they could see what took place.

As might be supposed, they did not take much stock in what Young Wild West was going to give them in the way of an entertainment.

Really they were waiting for a chance to get Arietta.

Glenn had planned to abduct her with the help of two or three of his companions, and then ride away alone with her.

The rest would follow him later.

But let us see what Hop Wah was going to do.

Jim had not seen him make any preparations, so of course he had not the least idea.

The Chinaman knew he would have to perform something that was really mystifying, so he got ready. Selecting an open spot, where the ground was hard and almost devoid of grass, he began operations by first telling a story about the wonderful uncle he had in Pekin.

He was listened to keenly by the spectators, for they thought he was really a funny heathen.

The story done—or about as near done as he ever got it—he took an empty tomato can from one of his mysterious pockets and showed it.

Then he asked one of the cowboys to bring him a few fagots from the scene of the ox-roast.

His request was complied with in a hurry.

Hop placed the fagots so they quickly formed into a blaze.

"Now bling a lillee wood," he said.

This was done.

In a few minutes he had quite a fire going.

"Me havee lillee water now," he said to the cowboy who had been so ready to wait upon him.

He handed over the empty can and the water was soon brought to him.

"Me no wantee full," he said, as he poured some of it out. "Me wantee make water boil allee same putty goodee; len me makee nicee lillee Chinee baby oute um steam."

The crowd was not very much interested.

The can containing the water was placed on the fire and then the Celestial produced a white gauzy garment that looked as though it might be a baby's dress.

He held this up and caused a laugh.

"Me gitee leady to dless um baby," he said, smiling in his childish way. "Me likee baby velly muchee."

While he kept on talking in this strain he stooped over the can of water and seemed to be watching it intently and arranging it so it would not be apt to fall over.

But he was doing more than that.

He was arranging for the climax of his wonderful trick.

He had placed a thin sack of almost invisible rubber over the top of the can, which would expand out under the least pressure.

And as it was made in such a shape that it would develop into the form of an infant that would be the climax of the trick—or rather near to the climax, for there was something to come after it appeared.

When he had it all arranged to his full satisfaction not one of the spectators knew that he had placed anything over the top of the can.

The smoke from the fire hid it from view.

Pretty soon the water began to boil.

Then Hop invited the crowd to come a little closer and keep their eyes fixed on the can.

There came a gentle hissing sound and then something began to slowly rise from the can of boiling water.

There was just enough steam that escaped to partly envelop the thin rubber bag, and when they saw the object slowly forming above the smoke and steam the cowboys grew suddenly silent.

Even Gabe Glenn and his men opened wide their eyes.

Larger and larger the rubber bag grew, and presently it began to assume the shape and proportions of the upper half of a baby.

A low murmur of astonishment went up.

"Poor lillee baby," said Hop, mournfully, and he stretched out his hands to it.

Then the spectators all thought they heard the cry of an infant.

But it was only Hop, of course.

The thin rubber bag now being fully developed, Hop suddenly picked up the can and placed the gauzy dress about it.

But only for an instant did he hold it in his hands.

He gave the whole thing a toss in the air, dropping something in the fire as he did so.

Puff—boom!

An explosion rang out and a thick cloud of smoke obscured the Chinaman from view for the space of two or three seconds.

Shouts of astonishment went up on every hand, but when the smoke suddenly cleared, and Hop stood before them, bowing, with a big bouquet of flowers in his hand, a cheer that awoke the echoes went up from the cowboys.

"That is what I call a pretty good trick," said Wild, turning to his friends.

"It sartinly was," the scout admitted. "That heathen is as smart as a steel trap. I wonder how he done it?"

Just then it was discovered that the dry grass near the cattle pen was on fire.

Some thought the explosion the Chinaman had caused had done it, but it was really the cow-punchers who had done it.

Gabe Glenn thought it was time for him to get in his foul work.

There was a strong wind blowing and the fire was leaping toward the broad prairie beyond.

"Put it out, boys!" cried Young Wild West, darting for the spot.

The air was filled with smoke in a jiffy.

Suddenly Arietta, who had started to run toward the fire, felt herself seized by a pair of strong arms.

Before she could utter a cry a hand was pressed over her mouth and she was lifted to the back of a horse.

It was Gabe Glenn who had her, and the next minute a blanket was thrown over her head and he went galloping away with her right into the smoke that was ahead of the advancing prairie fire.

It was surely a daring scheme that the villain was trying to put through, and in the excitement he had worked it well, for, owing to the smoke, no one but his confederates saw what had happened to the girl.

CHAPTER VI.

WILD AND HIS PARTNERS HOT ON THE TRAIL.

It was a big fight the cowboys had ahead of them to put out the fire.

Young Wild West knew very well that it was not Hop Wah who had started the grass in a blaze.

The fires that had been kindled that day had only been on ground that was almost devoid of grass, but the blaze had started some fifty yards away, and near the stockade.

But there was no time to figure out how it had happened now.

The thing to do was to get it out before it got too much headway.

There had been no rain in nearly a week, and the old grass was very dry.

In some places the new was so thick that it counteracted the flames.

Wild and his partners worked like beavers.

The green grass caused an awful lot of smoke and they could scarcely see what they were doing.

But in less than twenty minutes the wind died down, and what there was left of it changed.

Then it was quite easy to get the fire under control.

It was something like three-quarters of an hour after the fire broke out when our hero and his companions came back to the corral and looked around for the girls.

They could not find them there, so they thought they must have gone back to the ranch.

It was a few minutes after they came to this conclusion that they saw Anna and Eloise riding toward them as though in a great hurry over something.

A look of uneasiness came over the face of Young Wild West.

Somehow he felt that something was wrong.

"There's Anna an' Eloise, but I don't see nothin' of Arietta," the scout remarked.

"I don't know where she can be," retorted our hero. "I haven't seen her since the blaze started along the end of the corral."

The two girls soon reached them.

When they brought their horses to a halt they looked around in a puzzled way.

"What's ther matter, gals?" Charlie asked.

"Where is Arietta?" queried his wife.

"Why, wasn't she with you?" Young Wild West cried, stepping over to them and looking anxious.

"She was with us when the cowboys started to put out the fire," the scout's wife answered. "Then we were half blinded by a puff of smoke, and when we looked around again Arietta was gone. We thought she might have dodged out of sight in a spirit of mischief and rode off to the house."

"She wouldn't do that," our hero said, shaking his head decisively. "She would have set to with us and helped put the fire out, if anything. This is what I call strange. Something has happened to Et, just as sure as my name is Young Wild West!"

"It looks that way," Jim observed. "How about the cow punchers, Wild?"

"I was just thinking of them," was the reply. "Can it be that the scoundrel I burned with the branding iron has taken her away in some manner?"

"It might be. I feel sartin that ther galoot was lookin' fur a chance ter git square on yer, Wild," spoke up the scout. "I was watchin' Glenn, an' ther rest of ther cow-punchers, too, but I never had no sich idea as that they was goin' ter bother with any of ther gals. I had an idea that he would try ter give it to yer in ther back, or somethin' like that. If ther galoots has gone yer kin bet that it's them what's responsible fur ther disappearance of Arietta."

Charlie spoke in a way that told plainly how sure he was. Wild quickly mounted his horse and began riding around in search of the cow-punchers.

He had sized them up pretty well and would know any of them among the rest.

It took him less than ten minutes to find out that not one of them were there.

Then he rode up to the man who had been in charge of the ox-roast and said to him:

"When did those fellows from Reynolds' Ranch leave?"

"I don't know," was the reply; "but I think they was here until after the fire was put out."

That was all the information he could get, for when he asked others they answered in about the same way.

"Well, boys," our hero said to Charlie and Jim, "there is no use in getting excited over it. It looks very much as though Gabe Glenn has managed to get hold of Arietta in some way, and has carried her off, just to get square with me for beating him at the hot branding iron game. We must follow the galoots, and if we find out that they have done this, lead must fly!"

"You bet!" exclaimed the scout, his dark eyes flashing dangerously. "If Glenn has carried Arietta off I reckon Reynolds will be lookin' fur another foreman putty quick!"

"And some more cow-punchers, too," added Jim.

Wild now turned to Anna and Eloise and told them to go back to the ranch and not to worry about Arietta.

"It may be that she will be there when you get back," he said; "but I hardly think so. She is not given to acting in that way. The chances are that she was seized and carried away on horseback during the excitement caused by the burning grass. If she was we won't be long in finding her."

"You are going to take some of the cowboys with you, are you not?" Anna asked.

"No. I guess the three of us can take care of all the cow-punchers that ever came from Reynolds' Ranch. We'll fix them in short order if they have got Et."

It was not yet four o'clock, so the sun was still pretty high.

Wild figured that by hard riding they ought to overtake the scoundrels before dark.

But he felt that there was no time to be lost.

As Anna and Eloise started back for the ranch our hero called Hoss Thompson and told him what had happened.

"You can let some of the boys go out and search for her," he said. "Tell them that we have gone on the trail of Gabe Glenn and his cow-punchers."

Then away rode the three.

They were all armed with Winchester rifles, as well as their six-shooters and hunting knives.

They rode along the plain trail for a mile or two and then began looking for some place where the villains might have turned either to the right or left.

But nothing but the paths of cattle here and there could they see.

Finally they reached the tracks of the Southern Pacific railroad.

The trail that led to a prairie town beyond crossed it, and it was along this that they had heard that Reynolds' Ranch was located.

But would the cow-punchers be fools enough to take the girl there?

That was the question that Young Wild West asked himself.

It semed hardly likely that they would, unless they were altogether without judgment.

"Boys, what do you think about this?" our hero asked, as he brought his sorrel stallion to a halt, after crossing the track. "Is it likely that Gabe Glenn would take Arietta to the ranch he works on?"

"I wouldn't think so," Jim answered, shaking his head.

"If he did he could see his end starin' him right in ther face," the scout added. "No, it's most likely that if ther galoot has got Arietta he'll go some place an' hide her. He knows enough ter do that, I reckon. He don't want ter die, it ain't likely."

Our hero sat in the saddle, and with his hand above his eyes to shade them, he scanned the open country.

He had not looked long when he observed a solitary horseman approaching.

The fellow was following the track to the eastward.

"I guess we'll wait and see who that fellow is. Perhaps he can give us some information," he said.

On came the man, riding at a medium fast pace.

As he drew nearer our friends recognized him as one of Reynolds' cow-punchers.

"Great gimlets!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie, suddenly: "it's ther galoot yer run out, Wild! It's ther feller what shot one of ther ranch boys in ther calf of ther leg."

"That is just who it is, Charlie," was the calm rejoinder; "I had an idea it was him when I first recognized him as one of the men from Reynolds' Ranch."

The horseman had evidently recognized them, for he had slowed down, and appeared to be hesitating about coming on.

"I guess we had better ride out and meet him before he takes a notion to light out," Jim suggested.

"That's so!" our hero answered.

Then they started forward at a canter.

Seeing that there was little chance for him to get away, the cow-puncher came on.

"Hello, my friend!" called out Wild, as he reined in his horse close to the man. "What are you doin' here alone?"

"Well, I thought it was about time ther rest of ther gang was beginnin' ter show up," was the reply. "Did Gabe Glenn an' ther rest leave Buckhorn Ranch yet?"

"No. They are there yet, and they are having a good time, which you might have had if you hadn't got too handy with your gun."

As Wild said this he looked at the man closely.

It did not take him more than a second to realize that the man knew he was telling what was not true.

"Well," said he, after a pause, "I got mad too quick, I reckon. I'm sorry ther thing happened."

"I suppose you are—very sorry. But, see here, Jake—I believe that is the name they called you?"

"Yes; that's my name."

"I want you to tell me where Glenn is!"

There was a revolver in our hero's hand in the twinkling of an eye and the muzzle was pointed directly at the cow-puncher's nose.

Jake gave a start.

He had not expected anything like that.

"Wha—what do—do yer mean?" he gasped.

"Just what I say. Where is Glenn?"

"Why, yer jest said he was over at Buckhorn Ranch yet," faltered the man, cowering before the deadly tube.

"Yes, I know I said that, but know it is not so. Where did Glenn take the young lady? Tell me, or I'll let a streak of daylight through your miserable head!"

"Don't shoot, Young Wild West!" cried the rascal, putting his hands over his head. "You wouldn't shoot a man when he hollers fur quarter, would yer?"

"I will certainly shoot you right as you sit in that saddle if you don't tell me what I want to know. I mean business, you cowardly hound!"

"I don't know what you're talkin' about; I don't fur a sect."

"You lie!"

"What do yer want me ter tell yer?"

"What I asked you to."

"You want to know where Gabe Glenn went?"

"That is just what I want to know. I know already that he has got one of the young ladies belonging to Buckhorn Ranch, but I want to find out where he has gone with her."

Jake looked around as though to find some one who would help him out of the fix he had got himself in.

But there was not a soul to be seen.

Young Wild West sat before him, stern and persistent, and the revolver was still pointing at his nose.

There was an ugly gleam in the eyes of Cheyenne Charlie, too, while Jim Dart looked very much as though he was ready to shoot him down as though he was a prowling wolf.

Jake thought he had better make a clean breast of it.

"If I tell yer all I know will yer let me go?" he asked, faintly, for he could not get his tongue in the right shape to speak out loudly.

"Yes, after we find that you have not lied."

The villain shrugged his shoulders and became more uneasy than ever.

Though our hero would not have been guilty of such a thing as shooting him down in cold blood, Jake thought he would.

"I met Gabe Glenn less than half an hour ago," said the cow-puncher, again looking around for some one to help him.

But there was no one to be seen, as before.

"There wasn't none of the boys with him, either," he went on to say.

"But there was some one with him, though," Wild exclaimed, sternly. "Who was it?"

"I couldn't tell if I tried. I don't know ther name."

"See here, Jake! If you don't want to die, just tell me all about it."

"Well, he had a gal with him, then!" blurted out the villain. "I s'pose it's ther one you're lookin' fur."

"Ah! Now we're getting down to business. Where did Gabe Glenn take the girl?"

Before the man could answer a shout rang out from the other side of the railroad track, and, turning that way, our friends saw five of the cow-punchers approaching at a break-neck speed.

CHAPTER VII.

ARIETTA IN PERIL.

Arietta knew right away that it was the enemies of Wild who had seized her.

She made a brave struggle to get away and utter a scream for help, but it was no use.

Gabe Glenn had done his work well.

The villain had only conceived the idea of setting the dry grass afire at the very last moment.

In fact, it had occurred to him all at once.

He did not think it would make as much of a fire as it did, and it surely would not have had it not been that a strong breeze sprang up just then.

The villain was elated with his success, and when he had the girl so it was impossible for her to escape from him he galloped way ahead of the burning grass at the top of his broncho's speed.

He wanted to get to the old uninhabited ranch as soon as possible.

But the high speed and double weight began telling on the animal now, and five miles up the track he was forced to stop for a rest.

There was a timber strip right here, and, dismounting at the edge of it, where he would not be apt to be seen, the villain lifted Arietta down and let her recline against a tree.

Those who had assisted him in her capture had tied her hands behind her and bound her limbs together so she could not walk, even if she had the opportunity to try it.

Poor Arietta!

It was awful to be alone with that fiend in human form, for it did not take her very long to realize that his mind was becoming unbalanced.

She felt that she had better humor him to a certain extent.

"I think there is some good in you, Mr. Glenn, by the way you act and talk," she said, looking at him as calmly

as she could. "You are not the man who would harm a defenseless girl, and I know it."

"You bet your life I wouldn't!" he cried, as he smote his breast in emphasis. "I'll never harm a hair of your head, gal. When I find a minister ter tie ther knot you'll be my wife. What galoot would harm ther gal he expects ter make his wife!"

The next minute they heard the sounds made by an approaching horse.

Arietta's heart jumped.

She thought it might be Wild coming.

But no!

The next minute she saw that it was one of the villain's gang who was riding up.

It proved to be the man called Jake.

"Hello, Gabe!" he called out, as he rode up and halted. "I seen yer ride this way, an' I thought I'd come over an' see what it was yer had on your horse with yer."

"Hello, Jake!" answered the boss of the cow-punchers. "I'm glad yer come! I've got one of ther gals what belongs ter Buckhorn Ranch here. Putty good, ain't it?"

"Well, I should reckon so!' and Jake was really surprised.

"After you was drove from ther brandin' 'bee I had a fight with Young Wild West with red-hot brandin' irons. It was a square fight, and ther boy not only got ther best of me, but he put a mark on my face that I'll carry ter my grave. I swore I'd git revenge fur it, so I got ther chance ter steal his sweetheart. But she ain't his sweetheart any more; she's mine now!"

Jake grinned.

There was little that was good in him.

"What are yer goin' ter do with her, Gabe?" he asked, afetr a pause.

"Take her to ther deserted ranch an' keep her there till this thing blows over. Young Wild West an' his friends won't never know what has become of her, it ain't likely."

Jake was a pretty ignorant man, but it was evident that he did not hardly believe that.

"Now I tell you what I want you ter do, Jake," went on Glenn. "Five of ther boys is goin' ter foller me ter ther deserted ranch, an' ther other five is goin' straight home. You ride over ter Reynolds' an' tell them that comes back not ter say a word about where I am, or what was done—not if they die fur it, Jake! I don't think I will ever come back ter Reynolds' Ranch, now that I've made up my mind ter git married. An' say, Jake!"

"What is it, Gabe?"

Jake was now beginning to think that there was something wrong with his leader.

"Jest try an' git a minister an' fetch him over ter ther deserted ranch, will yer? There's one or two rooms in ther old buildin' that's in putty good shape, an' we'll have a weddin' there. Ther sooner yer kin git ther minister ther better it will suit me."

"All right," answered the villainous cow-puncher, for, as ignorant as he was, he now thought that Glenn was certainly going crazy.

Instead of trying to persuade the leader of the cow-punchers to let the girl go—or force him to do it, for that matter—the cowardly scoundrel rode off.

When he had gone Glenn lifted Arietta to the back of his horse once more and then proceeded straight for the old ranch house.

He had lost all his caution now, and the trail he left behind him was a plain one.

That Gabe Glenn had been at the old house recently was evident, for when he lifted his captive from the horse he carried her unhesitatingly through a big bunch of weeds right into an opening that had been caused by the center part of the building falling in.

Stumbling over the rotten beams and boards, he made his way along until he came to a door that opened from the hall—or what had once been the hall.

The door was closed, and, allowing the girl to sink to the floor and remain in a standing position, he struck a match.

It was as dark as the tomb in there, and the glare of the match made the surroundings look ghostly in the extreme.

Arietta shuddered in spite of herself.

Glenn opened the door before the match burned out.

Then he lighted another and looked in.

"Lean ag'in ther wall," he said in a hoarse whisper. "There's a lantern in here. I left it here one night about six weeks ago, an' I reckon there ain't no one been here since. I'll light up ther room you're ter stay in, an' then after I make it a leetle comfortable fur yer I'll untie ther ropes you've got around yer ankles an' wrists. My! there goes one of them blamed rats!"

The girl shuddered as she heard the half-starved rodent scampering over the ruins.

Glenn drew his knife and looked at his fair captive curiously.

At first she thought he was thinking of killing her, so when he stooped and severed the rope that held her ankles together she breathed a sigh of relief.

"Now yer kin walk, anyhow," he said. "Git on in, gal."

Arietta obeyed as a frightened child might have done.

But she was not doing it because she was frightened; she was simply trying to make it appear that she was fully under his control and had no idea of escaping.

The room was really nothing more than a big closet and was entirely without windows.

"Now," said he, "you set right there till I come back. I'm goin' out ter put my horse away. I'll untie your hands when I come back."

"But the rats!" exclaimed Arietta. "They may get at me!"

"No, they won't. I won't be gone long enough ter let 'em. Jest keep cool, gal. You're all right."

There was no use in pleading with him; she knew that.

She might cause him to change his mind about untying her hands if she did, so she remained silent, while he turned and went out of the room, taking the lantern with him and leaving her in darkness.

CHAPTER VIII.

WHAT JAKE DID FOR OUR FRIENDS.

The five cow-punchers who were riding toward Young Wild West and his partners were those who were to have followed Gabe Glenn to the deserted ranch.

They had mistaken what he said when he left with his captive, and had gone in a direction just opposite to what he had told them.

And now they had discovered their mistake and were hurrying to get to the place.

The bed of the railroad track was a little high right where our friends were, so they had failed to note the approach of the villains until they got within a couple of hundred yards.

A look of joy came in the eyes of Jake when he saw his friends coming.

But it was short-lived.

"Answer what I said to you, or you will die!" exclaimed Wild.

Charlie and Jim now turned their attention to the approaching horsemen.

They had unslung their rifles and held them in readiness.

The cow-punchers were without rifles, of course, since they did not need them in their regular line of business.

It was little show that they would have if they undertook to make a fight of it.

The villain Jake hesitated a moment and then said:

"Gabe was goin' ter take ther gal to an old ranch house what is gone ter rack an' ruin."

"Where is it?"

"Well, I reckon if yer foller my trail back where I come from yer kin pick up his easy enough, an' then yer kin foller him ter ther place. It's quite a piece from here."

Jake was telling the truth now.

Wild knew it.

"Well, I guess you will go along with us," he said. "Just hold up your hands till I relieve you of your shooters and knife."

There was no help for it, so the villain obeyed.

Meanwhile the five rascally cow-punchers had brought their horses to a halt about two hundred feet away.

It was evident that they had not recognized our friends until they got there.

They could see our hero disarming Jake, and that made them think that they were in for it, too.

"Come on over here!" Wild called out; "I want to talk to you."

Charlie and Jim raised their rifles threateningly, so they thought they had better come.

With their bronchos on a walk, they came up to the spot.

"Well, boys," said Wild in his cool and easy way, "I hear

you were parties to a very villainous transaction this afternoon. All of you just shut your eyes and see if you can't imagine that you see rope collars dangling in front of you."

"What do yer mean, Young Wild West?" asked one of them, affecting surprise.

"You know very well what I mean!" the boy thundered with flashing eyes. "You helped Gabe Glenn to carry off my sweetheart! You are going to suffer for it, too!"

The men turned all colors as they looked at each other and remained silent.

One of them proved to be a very spunky fellow.

"You don't know what you're talkin' about, Young Wild West," he said. "If you say we had anything ter do with carryin' off a gal you lie!"

The words were scarcely out of his mouth when Wild gave a jerk on the reins and the sorrel leaped straight for the villain's horse.

Whack!

The cow-puncher received a blow on the side of the head that sent him from the saddle.

"Hands up, you slab-sided galoots!" cried Cheyenne Charlie, as he saw them reaching for their shooters.

Both he and Jim Dart had them covered.

"When a man calls me a liar he always goes down!" remarked our hero, coolly. "Now, I want you fellows to admit that you helped Gabe Glen to carry off the young lady. I know you gave him a hand, so out with it! I am just in the humor to shoot, and if I do it will be to kill!"

Taking the chances of being shot, two of them suddenly wheeled their horses around and galloped away.

Charlie was going to fire at them, but Wild checked him.

"Don't shoot them in the back," he said. "Let them go. I don't know as we have any use for them just now, anyhow. We'll go and find Arietta, and then we'll settle with them afterward. Every man who had a hand in her abduction will either hang or get out of Texas!"

The fellow he had knocked from his horse still remained on the ground.

"Mount!" said Wild, commandingly.

The cow-puncher obeyed.

"Now the three of you see how fast you can ride away from here. We are going to take Jake with us. Light out!"

They needed no second invitation.

Away they went as fast as they could make their bronchos go.

Cheyenne Charlie shook his head sadly.

"They ain't fit ter live, Wild!" he exclaimed. "They oughter be riddled!"

"Never mind, Charlie," was the reply; "the chances are that they will follow us, and then they will get their medicine. Jake, you ought to be glad that you are living, for you have got a chance for your life. Just make up your mind to act honest now, and lead us to the old ranch you spoke about."

"All right," was the quick retort. "I s'pose it's ther best thing fur me ter do as yer say. I'm ready."

Wild turned and saw that the five cow-punchers were riding swiftly off in a sort of circle.

"They mean to follow us," he said. "Well, let them. I guess they will wish they hadn't before they get through. I am desperate now. Arietta must be found, and that as soon as possible."

The dashing young deadshot motioned for Jake to ride at his side, and then he rode off over the trail the villain had made when he came to them.

When they finally reached the timber strip where Jake had found Glenn and Arietta he showed them where they had been resting and just how the leader of the cow-punchers acted and what he said.

"He's crazy," he added. "Ther idee of his tellin' me ter git a minister, so he could marry ther gal."

"The minister he will get will be a bullet," Young Wild West answered, significantly, "and his bride will be Death!"

"I guess you are right," said Jake.

"Yer kin bet all you're worth on that, you measly coyote, you!" the scout remarked.

"He hadn't oughter done it. But I don't think he's right in ther head since he got ther cross put on his face with ther brandin' iron. He told me about it, an' he acted awful funny when he was talkin'," Jake said.

"If he's crazy that won't be any excuse in this case," remarked Jim Dart. "When a galoot goes so far as to abduct a girl he must expect hot lead, that's all."

The cow-puncher said no more just then.

As has been stated, the trail Gabe Glenn left was a plain one.

Our friends followed it until darkness overtook them, and then Wild turned to Jake.

"It is for you to lead us to the deserted ranch now," he said.

"All right," was the reply; "I'll do it. I don't like ter go back on Gabe, of course, 'cause he's been a good friend of mine."

"Well, just forget the friendship part of it and show us the way."

They rode on at a rapid pace and finally came to the place.

When Jake pointed out the exact spot where the tumble-down house was located Wild called a halt.

"I guess I'll go ahead on foot and see what I can find out," he said. "The rest of you stay here, and if you don't hear anything of me inside of fifteen minutes come and look for me."

It must have popped into the rascal's head just then that he ought to warn Glenn of the danger that threatened him.

His feet had hardly struck the ground when he darted into the thick bushes and disappeared.

"I'll let Gabe know they're here after him!" he exclaimed under his breath as he darted straight for the house. "Mebbe he kin pop 'em over with his shooters when they come, then. It are most likely that I'll be hung, anyhow."

He had not gone a dozen yards before he heard some one in pursuit of him.

The villain only ran all the faster and presently the old house loomed up before him.

He turned and saw a form coming swiftly after him less than thirty feet away.

Just then the villain happened to think that there was an old well right there somewhere.

He leaped to the right just in time to escape falling in it, and the next moment he was among the ruins.

Splash!

The scoundrel's heart gave a bound.

His pursuer had fallen in the well!

Before the villain knew what had happened a ray of light flashed in his face and then a hand seized him by the throat.

"Who are yer?" a voice hissed in his ear.

"It's me—Jake!" was the gasping reply.

"Oh!"

Then the cow-puncher knew that it was no other than Gabe Glenn who had seized him.

"Yer come nigh chokin' me ter death, Gabe," he whispered, hoarsely.

"Did yer fetch ther minister?" asked the leader of the cow-punchers in a strange, but eager tone.

"No. Young Wild West an' his pards fetched me here, but I jest got away from 'em. One of 'em fell in ther well, an' I think it's Young Wild West."

Jake said this quickly—as though his life depended on it.

"Come in here, Jake!" he exclaimed. "We'll fix Young Wild West or any other galoot what comes here!"

He took the man by the shoulder and fairly pushed him into one of the two rooms that remained in anything like a tenantable condition.

It was not the one that Arietta occupied.

That was next to it, and a door opened in it.

"Git your shooter ready!" exclaimed Gabe.

"I ain't got none," was the reply.

"Take one of mine, then."

The villain took the weapon gladly.

"Gabe, they'll git us if we don't look sharp. I couldn't help it; I had ter fetch 'em here, or they'd have killed me. But I got away from 'em an' run here ter warn yer."

"You told 'em where I am!"

"I had ter, Gabe."

"Wait till this thing is over!"

Then Jake wished he had stayed right with his captors.

He could tell by the tone of the man's voice that he meant to pay him for what he had done.

Jake resolved to get away from the old house as soon as possible.

Just then a cry for help was heard from the outside.

"That must be ther galoot that fell in ther well," said Glenn, as he listened.

"Yes, I reckon so," was the rather feeble retort.

"Well, let him holler. Kin yer tell which one it is by ther voice of him?"

"I thought it was Young Wild West, but it ain't. It's ther big galoot they calls Cheyenne Charlie, I reckon."

It was at that moment that the door of the adjoining room opened softly.

Glenn flew for it like a tiger.

Arietta, whose hands had been freed, as the villain had promised, stepped out.

He had left her in the room by herself, not bothering her until now.

CHAPTER IX.

IN THE DARK.

It was Cheyenne Charlie who had started in pursuit of the villain Jake.

Wild told him to, while he hastened around to the other side of the house.

He also told Jim to leave the horses there and follow up Charlie slowly, in case he would be needed.

Jim could hear the noise made by the pursuer and pursued as they went crashing through the bushes, so he followed the sounds.

In some way he got entangled in a mass of vines before he knew it, having diverged from the course they had taken.

It took Jim a couple of minutes to find his way out.

And just then he heard Charlie call for help.

The voice sounded far off and he could not understand it.

But once clear of the tangle he made his way hurriedly for the spot he thought the voice came from.

"Hello, Charlie!" he called out in a low tone.

"I'm down ther measly old well, Jim," came the answer. "There ain't much water in it, but ther blamed stones is so slippery that I can't climb out."

"I'll get you out!"

Jim was on his stomach in a twinkling and trying to peer down the well."

"How deep is it, Charlie?" he whispered.

"Not more than a dozen feet, I reckon," was the retort.

"Are you hurt?"

"No, but I'm putty wet. Hurry up an' git me out."

Then the scout managed to climb up the slippery stones far enough for Jim to get hold of his hand.

It was easy enough then, and Charlie was soon pulled out, not much the worse for his sudden drop into the well.

Luckily he had landed on his feet when he went down.

His rifle had been left hanging to the horn of his saddle, but he had his other weapons yet.

The water had not injured them any.

Once out of the well, Charlie advised that they get back into the bushes a little.

He knew that the man Jake had gone into the house.

And it was quite likely that Gabe Glenn was there, if the scoundrel who had escaped from them had told the truth.

"We might run into a trap if we try ter git in that tumble-down place," the scout said in a whisper. "I wish Wild would come around here."

"He went around the other side," Jim answered. "You can bet he won't be long in finding out whether Arietta is in the old house or not."

The two waited for five minutes without hearing a sound.

Then they began to grow anxious.

"I reckon I'll take ther chance of givin' our signal ter Wild," Charlie finally said.

"All right. You can do it better than I can; go ahead."

The scout gave an excellent imitation of the hoot of an owl twice.

It was answered almost immediately from a point the other side of the house.

"That's Wild," whispered Charlie. "I reckon I'll go around there an' see what he's doin'. You wait here, in case any one comes out. If Gabe Glenn has really got Arietta in there we're bound ter find her."

"All right," answered Jim.

Charlie moved away noiselessly through the darkness.

It was scarcely half a minute later when Jim heard the unmistakable sounds made by approaching hoofs.

He thought of the five cow-punchers they had met right away.

The villains had followed them and were now riding up.

"It looks as though there is going to be a lively time of it pretty soon," the boy thought. "I wish I knew whether Arietta is in that house or not."

But there was such a silence about the place that it hardly seemed possible that she was.

One thing, Jim was certain that there was some one in the house.

The scoundrel, Jake, had gone there, and it was hardly likely that he would dare venture out.

Nearer and nearer came the sounds of the horses.

They were within a hundred yards of the old house when Jim suddenly heard the hoot of an owl right near him.

He gave the answer.

Then Wild and Charlie both crept up by him.

They had both heard the horses coming, and they thought it advisable to get together.

They now drew back to a clump of rocks about a hundred feet back of the building.

There were bushes growing all around the rocks, so they would be hidden from view.

The only thing that bothered them just then was the thought that the villains might find their horses.

But they had left them at a spot quite a little distance from the old trail, so there was a chance that they would not.

The next minute they knew that the horses had not been discovered, for the horsemen rode right up close to the front of the old house and came to a halt.

Then they heard the voice of Gabe Glenn call out suddenly:

"Right here, boys! I'm mighty glad you've come!"

"Now we know our man is here!" exclaimed Dick. "And that means that Arietta is in the house, too. Boys, we will have to play cards sharp now and win the game."

"It's too bad that we didn't rush in afore them galoots got here," said the scout, shaking his head. "We could have won out in a hurry then."

"Never mind, Charlie," replied our hero. "We'll soon have them. There's seven of them, I know, but I guess we can handle them. Arietta has got to be saved, and we must do it without getting hurt."

"If we can do no better we can set the building afire and get them excited over it," suggested Dart.

"Well, that would be a good way to get square with them. They set the grass on fire over at Buckhorn Ranch, so they would have a chance to seize Arieta in the excitement and make off with her. It would simply be giving the scoundrels some of their own medicine. We will think about that, Jim."

What Young Wild West really wanted to do was to get into the old building without the cow-punchers knowing it.

He knew that more could be done by strategy than by force, and also that Arietta would stand less show of being abused or insulted by the villains.

But not knowing anything about the house, it would be a rather risky thing to do for him to try and get inside it.

Still, Wild thought it was worth trying.

He was quite sure that the men inside the building were keeping a sharp watch for them.

But the dashing young deadshot was eager to rescue his pretty and brave sweetheart.

That was incentive enough.

"Boys, I am going to try and get into that house," he whispered.

Charlie and Jim nodded their heads.

"When I get inside where it has fallen down over there I want one of you to throw something in the well, so it will make a loud splash, and then let out a yell."

"You want to make it appear that some one has fallen in the well again; I understand," answered Jim Dart.

"That's it exactly. The sounds will attract the attention of the scoundrels, and while they are listening I may be able to get where I want to go."

It being understood, Wild stole softly through the bushes for the house.

Charlie felt around and found a stone that weighed probably twenty pounds.

"I reckon this will make a splash," he observed with a chuckle. "Jim, you kin do ther yellin'."

"All right," was the reply. "But how will we know when Wild gets in there?"

"We must watch. See! Yer kin look between them two parts over there. When he shows up in ther openin' we'll know he's there."

The two moved nearer the well.

Then they waited.

They knew that Wild must be there now, so they tried to pierce the gloom and see him.

The next moment they did see him.

Charlie crept forward with the stone.

Splash!

He let it go into the well.

"Ow-wow! Help—help!" yelled Jim.

Then they quickly got into the bushes again.

They had scarcely settled down when they heard hurried footsteps.

Then they saw the forms of two men come out of the house and run to the well.

Crack! Crack!

They both fired into it, evidently expecting to put the finish to the person who had fallen in, as they thought.

Charlie became exasperated, and before Jim knew what he was up to, he had opened fire on the two scoundrels.

The scout did not shoot for the purpose of scaring them; he shot to kill.

When he saw that the men were cruel and cowardly enough to shoot down the well when they thought there was some one there he made up his mind that they were not fit to live.

The two cow-punchers staggered and tried to get back to the house.

One of them lurched and fell into the well he had just been shooting down.

The other fell a few feet from it.

"Come!" exclaimed the scout; "we'll git behind them rocks, where we was jest now."

Jim knew that it was the proper thing to do, so the two quickly crept away.

They had scarcely got there when a volley of shots came from a window in the house.

But Charlie and Jim did not hear the hum of the bullets.

The villains had fired in the bushes back of the well, probably thinking their foes were located there.

"I reckon they'll be ther sickest lot of galoots what ever rode over Texas prairie grass afore we get through with 'em!" exclaimed Cheyenne Charlie.

"Those who are left will feel sick, no doubt," Jim answered. "Two are gone now. I hardly knew it had happened before you had them both down, Charlie."

"Well, I know Wild wouldn't have done it, but it struck me that men who thought they was shootin' a helpless man down a well wasn't fit ter live, an' I let 'em have it. I ain't ther least bit sorry fur it, an' if I had my way about it every galoot of 'em would go ther same way."

Just then they caught the sound of a board cracking.

Instantly their eyes were turned in the direction it came from.

They saw nothing for the space of a couple of seconds, but then the figure of a man loomed up in the darkness.

Another came right after it, and still another!

That was all.

Three of the cow-punchers were coming out of the old house, presumably for the purpose of putting the finish to their foes.

The scout raised his revolver.

"Hold on!" whispered Jim. "Don't go to shooting right away. Give Wild a chance to do something."

"All right," was the retort. "I didn't think of that."

The three men moved noiselessly along the rear of the ruins and presently moved over in the direction where our two friends were concealed.

"I reckon it's got ter be a fight, Jim," whispered Charlie.

"Wait!" was the reply.

But the scout was right.

There had to be a fight, for the three men were creeping directly where they were.

Ten seconds later the foremost of them was within two feet of the muzzle of Jim's revolver, but he did not know it, of course.

The cow-punchers were pretty close to death!

CHAPTER X.

HOP WAH, THE JEWELER AND THE QUEEN OF DIAMONDS.

There was not a person connected with Buckhorn Ranch that knew of the strange disappearance of Arietta who did not do considerable worrying.

They all were anxious to find where she was and save her.

Isaac Rubenstein was more interested than one would suppose he would be.

He had been treated so well at Buckhorn Ranch, and he had disposed of the majority of his goods to such advantage, that he really felt that he ought to do something to show his appreciation.

The peddler was not a fighter, of course.

But he was very shrewd, and he could scheme pretty well.

He tried to give his views of the affair to different ones, but they did not seem inclined to listen to him.

Some of the visiting cowboys finished the branding, while a dozen of those belonging to the ranch set out for Reynolds' Ranch to hunt up Gabe Glenn and his gang of cow-punchers.

It was quite natural that they should all be of the opinion that they were the ones who had abducted Arietta.

Everything pointed that way.

Hoss Thompson did not go himself, but he placed a trusted man named Hamilton in charge of the cowboys.

Rubenstein watched the departure of the men with considerable interest.

After a while he walked over to Hop Wah, who had not yet returned to the ranch.

"Dot vos fery pad vork, eh, mine friend?" he observed.

"Velly bad," replied the Chinaman. "Bad cow-punchers takee Missy Alietta off; no likee Young Wild West; t'inkee makee mad."

"Do you know vot I t'ink?"

The jeweler spoke in a whisper, as though he was afraid the very ones he had been trying to say the same thing to would hear him.

"Whattee t'inkee?" Hop asked.

At last Rubenstein had found some one who would listen to him.

"I vos no t'ink der pad fellers take der young lady to der ranch vere they vork."

"Maybe not, so be."

"If dey vos take der young lady py dot blace it vould soon be found out, mine friend."

Hop nodded.

"So it vos strike me dot she vos tooken to some odder blaces."

"Cow-punchers takee Missy Alietta, allee samee," the Celestial insisted.

"Certainly, mine friend. No von else vos do dot. Put you can pet your pottom tollar dot dey vos take her mit some blace vere dey vos hide mit demselves. I t'ink me dot I vill go and look for dot young lady."

"Me go with um peddler, allee samee putty quick, so be!" exclaimed Hop.

"Good!"

Rubenstein rubbed his hands with satisfaction.

"You vos yust der von to hellup me," he added. "You vos von smart magician, and you could berhaps do somet'ing vot vould pe petter as pullets."

"Peddler man gittee horse and we go lightee 'way."

"Ve vill go mit mine puckboard, mine friend. I vos no like to ride mit der pack of a horse."

"Allee light; we go allee samee in um wagon."

Hop had his piebald mule there.

He went and got the animal and led him to the jeweler's rig.

"Vot you vos do?" Rubenstein asked, as he saw him tying the mule to the rear axle of the buckboard.

"We takee um mule along; maybe he comee in handy."

The peddler thought a moment and then nodded in the affirmative.

"All right," he said.

The horses were hitched to the wagon, and had been during the time they were on the grounds.

Rubenstein put the bits in their mouths and then strapped his trunk fast.

"You gottee shootee?" Hop asked.

"I vos always carry a bistol, mine friend," was the reply.

"You know how makee shootee with um pistol?"

"Haf nefer tried dot much, but I vos find der bistol a good t'ing to haf."

"Allee light. Me gottee biggee revolver, allee samee Young Wild West; me shootee likee bully boy with um glassee eye!"

Rubenstein nodded and looked at him admiringly.

In a few minutes the two were ready.

Then the team started off and the mule trotted on behind.

The cowboys who saw them leaving paid little attention to them, for they were too busy with other things just then.

"Me know um markee of Young Wild West's horse; me know um shoe when me see um," said Hop.

"You vos t'ink ve vos petter follow Young Vild Vest, den?"

"Sure, so be! Misler Wild find Missy Alietta. We helpee him."

The jeweler thought a while and then retorted:

"Vell, ve vos look on our own hook, too, already."

The horses being fresh, the buckboard was pulled along at a good speed.

Half an hour after they set out Hop turned and looked around.

There was no one in sight.

He gave a nod of satisfaction and then pulled a bottle from his pocket.

It was a quart bottle and it was full of some liquid.

"Vot is dot?" asked the peddler in surprise.

"Tanglefoot," was the reply.

"Visky?"

"Yes, allee samee goodee whisky."

"You vos like visky?"

"Me likee when me no feel veily good. Me no feel velly muchee good now."

"You vos got a bain, ain't it, mine friend?"

"Yes, velly muchee painee; tanglefoot makee feel allee light."

Hop quickly removed the cork and took a pull at the bottle.

He took a good one, too, and when he was done he smacked his lips and handed it to his companion.

"I vos no drink fery much," remarked the peddler, as he took the bottle, "but it vos petter dot I vos haf some courage already, so I vill take me von drink."

He took a good one, too, and then Hop put the cork back.

The celestial was a peculiar sort of a fellow.

Though he was really anxious that Arietta should be found, he felt that if Young Wild West could not do it no one could.

Still, he would like very much to have the chance of being some help to him.

But his desire for gambling always got the best of him when there was the least chance of getting into a game with somebody.

He was eager to get into some sort of a game with the peddler and win money from him.

He knew Rubenstein had plenty of it, and that made him feel as though it was likely he would go into a game with him.

But he pushed the feeling aside and they rode on, talking about various things.

They came to the railroad track about an hour and a half later than Wild and his partners reached it.

By this time they had pretty well emptied the bottle.

Hop got out of the wagon and looked around for the prints of the sorrel's shoes.

He was telling the truth when he said he knew them.

As the ground was soft and yielding there, he soon found the hoofprints.

"Ley go lis way," he said, when he had walked along a short distance and made sure of it.

Then he got into the wagon, and, after having another drink, they rode off.

It was near night now.

The sun was sinking in the west, and in another hour it would be pitch dark.

The whisky the two had imbibed made them feel a little tipsy.

As both had drunk some before they tackled the bottle, there was nothing strange in this.

Hop produced the bottle again and held it up.

There was just about enough for two big drinks left in it.

"We dlinkee um tanglefoot; len thlow bottle away," he said.

"All right," answered his companion, who was now in a very jolly frame of mind, his keen instincts for business having temporarily left him.

They finished the bottle between them, and then Hop asked that the team be stopped a minute.

His request was complied with, the peddler wondering what was coming next.

"Me showee how me shootee," explained Hop, as he got out and placed the empty bottle on the ground a few feet from the wagon; "you showee whattee you do with um revolver, too."

"Sure, mine friend."

Rubenstein pulled his pistol from his pocket.

It was one of the .22-caliber kind and looked like a toy to the Chinaman, who was used to seeing larger ones.

"Lat makee nicee watchee-charm," he remarked.

"It vos kill putty quick, yust der same."

He took aim at the bottle and fired.

He missed.

Then Hop took a shot with his big six-shooter.

He missed, too, but he saw the bullet plough up the earth a few inches from the bottle.

Crack!

Isaac Rubenstein fired again.

The bullet struck the ground three feet to the left of the target.

"Dot vos putty close already," he remarked.

Hop laughed.

Then he took careful aim and pressed the triggen.

Bang!

The report sounded and the bottle flew into bits.

"Lat nicee shot," he murmured, looking at the sky in a thoughtful way; "allee samee Young Wild West."

An exclamation of admiration came from the peddler.

"You vos von great shooter, mine friend," he observed.

It was not yet dark, so when Hop put his shooter back in his pocket he drew out a pack of cards.

He did it in an absent-minded sort of way, and when he looked at the cards he gave a start.

"Me not know me havee," he hastened to explain. "You play cards, Misler Rubelstein?"

"Yes, I vos blay cards blenty in mine life," was the retort.

"We no gottee timee play cards now; me velly smart with um cards."

"You vos fery smart with der cards, hey?"

"Yes, me lettee you pickee outee card and holdee behind you, and me say whatee card it is withoutee lookee."

The jeweler took the pack from him.

Then he pulled out a card at random and quickly thrust it behind him.

"I vos bet you fife tollar you vos no tell vot card I vos hafe pehind me!" he exclaimed.

"Me takee bet! Puttee uppee money."

Hop laid five dollars on the wagon seat.

The peddler was not long in convering it.

"Vot card is it I vos hold in mine hand?" he asked.

"Um queen of diamonds," said the Chinaman quickly.

Rubenstein drew around the card and turned it over.

It was the queen of diamonds, sure enough.

"You vos vin," he said, looking a little surprised. "You vos gife me a chance to gid mine money pack?"

"Yes, me no likee win money flom um fiend."

Rubenstein shuffled the deck.

It was a very small pack, but he did not appear to think anything was wrong about it.

When he had mixed the cards up thoroughly he pulled one of them out and quickly got it behind him.

"Vot card is dot?" he asked.

"Puttee uppee money first," Hop retorted, as he put his five dollars on the seat.

The jeweler obliged him.

"Um queen of diamonds," said the Chinaman; "um velly samee card you havee before."

When Rubenstein looked at the card his face was the picture of dismay, for Hop had won again.

But he was not going to give up yet.

This time he placed the card that had won for the celestial under him when he thought he was not observed.

Then he shuffled the pack, put down a five-dollar bill and another card behind him.

Hop covered the money and then said:

"Um queen of diamonds!"

Sure enough, it was, and as Hop put the money in his pocket Rubenstein looked over the rest of the cards.

They were all queen of diamonds!

CHAPTER XI.

WILD FINDS ARIETTA.

Arietta had heard Gabe Glenn talking to some one, and she made up her mind that it was time for her to make an effort to escape.

She knew right away that it must be one of his own gang, so that made her chances none the better.

But since the villainous cowpuncher had untied her hands she had been feeling comparatively safe.

Just as the cry from Cheyenne Charlie rang out she was moving for the door that opened into the room where Glenn and Jake were.

She recognized the scout's voice instantly, and she came to a pause, her face turning pale.

"Wild is here!" she thought. "But what has happened? That was Charlie's voice, I am certain."

She heard no more, though she listened intently.

Only the voices of the two scoundrels in the adjoining room could be heard, and they were talking in very low tones.

Arietta softly opened the door.

But as has been stated, she was not allowed to go any further.

Gabe Glenn caught her roughly by the shoulder.

"Git back in there, gal!" he exclaimed hoarsely. "Yer ain't goin' ter git away! Don't think yer are, 'cause you're goin' ter be Mrs. Gabe Glenn afore yer leave this old ranch, an' when yer do leave it it'll be with a kind an' lovin' husband which is about my size."

Arietta stepped back into the room.

The time was not ripe yet, she thought.

Anyhow, Wild was near at hand.

She felt sure of that, though she was worried over the cry for help she had heard the scout utter.

Glenn stood looking at her in a queer way for the space of a minute.

Then he suddenly turned and walked out of the room, closing the door after him.

The villain had found a lamp somewhere among the rooms that had some oil in it, and this had been lighted and allotted to Arietta's use.

The girl stood looking around her in silence for a few seconds, and then she went to the door she had been brought through on entering the closet-like apartment.

It was securely fastened on the outside.

But she tried it softly, anyhow.

Not knowing what else to do, she sat down on one of the rickety chairs.

It was not long before the five cowpunchers arrived at the house.

When Arietta heard them being welcomed by Gabe Glenn her hopes sank a little.

It seemed to her that her chances were growing worse instead of better.

But there was one dependence, anyhow, and that was the thought that Wild was near.

He would surely save her.

The brave girl listened and heard the men talking excitedly in the adjoining room.

Pretty soon she heard a loud splash outside and a cry for help.

It was Jim Dart this time, and the instant she heard it Arietta was struck with the idea that her friends were simply playing some sort of a game on the cowpunchers.

When the two men went out and fired shots into the well she did not know what they were up to, of course.

But when other shots sounded, and she heard curses in the next room, she felt that Wild and his partners had showed their hands in earnest.

The volley was fired from the window then, and the girl could not help smiling.

"They are shooting at nothing, I'll bet!" she exclaimed under her breath. "Wild, Charlie and Jim are not fools enough to show themselves and be made targets of."

The voices of the men grew louder, and presently she heard one of them say that two of their gang had been shot by Young Wild West and his partners.

"That will be the fate of all of you, if you don't look out," she thought. "I wish I had a revolver! I would try what I could do this very minute."

It was just at that moment that she heard a noise at the barred door.

Somebody was there!

And it certainly could not be the villains, for they were talking excitedly, as though trying to form some plan of action.

She stepped noiselessly to the door.

At that very moment it swung open a few inches.

Instinctively the girl knew that her dashing young lover was there.

"Wild!" she gasped.

"It's me, Et! Are you all right?" came the quick reply in a low whisper.

"Yes, Wild! Oh, I am so glad you have come!"

Just then she heard the men leaving the room next to her.

Then Young Wild West stepped in and closed the door.

Our hero held up his hand for silence.

Arietta understood.

She quickly drew him back and pushed him down behind one of the old chairs.

"Go out an' riddle ther galoots, boys!" Gabe Glenn shouted, and then there was a rush of footsteps through the old ruins.

The door leading to the other room opened slightly and Glenn looked in.

"Take it easy, gal," he said, laughing as though it was a great joke. "It'll soon be over now. Ther boys has come ter ther conclusion that ther only chance they've got is ter kill Young Wild West an' ther other pard of his. One of their pards is dead at ther bottom of ther well out there now, an' when ther rest is gone there won't be no one ter interfere with us no more. We'll git married, gal, an' we'll live as happy as a pair of butterflies in some other country."

He stepped all the way in the room as he finished speaking and closed the door.

The queer light in the villain's eyes told Arietta that the climax was at hand.

But she did not care now.

Her dashing young lover was crouching close behind her.

"What's your name, gal?" asked Glenn, as he paused before her.

"I don't know as it will make any difference whether you know my name or not," she retorted coolly.

"Oh, yes, it will. Tell me your name."

The brave girl felt Wild nudge her, so she took it that he wanted her to carry the thing along.

"Arietta is my name, then," she answered.

"What a putty name! Arietta, hey? Well, Arietta, I want jest one kiss afore I go out ter help my men rid ther world of Young Wild West!"

Then the muscular, agile form of Young Wild West popped up before the cowpuncher.

"Here's the kiss you will get, you hound!" the boy exclaimed, doing his level best to keep cool.

The muzzle of a revolver was thrust under the nose of the maniac, and, with a yell on his lips, he turned and dashed from the room.

"Come on, Et," said Wild, taking his sweetheart by the arm; "now is the time to get out of here. I must have that scoundrel before I go away from this vicinity, though."

He led the girl hurriedly from the house.

It was quite natural that he should make for the spot where the horses had been left.

The two walked softly along through the woods and bushes.

They could hear the searching cowpunchers as they went around looking for their foes, so they had a good chance to keep clear of them.

When they reached the horses they were quickly challenged by some one already there.

It was Cheyenne Charlie.

Jim Dart was right at his elbow, too.

The two had crept to the spot as soon as they saw that the villains were coming out to put up a fight.

"I reckon it's all right now!" the scout exclaimed in a whisper, as he shook Arietta's hand.

"Arietta has been found, but the finish has not come yet," Wild retorted.

The four got behind the trees, for they now heard footsteps coming that way.

Nearer came the footsteps.

They could hear the voices of the men, too.

They were talking just as though they did not care who heard them.

"I reckon they must be around here somewhere," the voice of Jake said.

"Yes, but where are they?" one of his companions answered.

"Oh, they won't go away, 'cause they know ther gal is in ther house," spoke up another. "I reckon Gabe will stay

right by her an' let us do ther fightin'. Well, there's only two of 'em left, anyhow, unless more has come."

"There ain't no more come," Jake assured them. "There'd be enough, though, if there was only one, an' it happened ter be Young Wild West."

Just then the villains came upon the horses of our friends.

"Here's their horses!" cried one of the cowpunchers jubilantly.

"Good!" the rest exclaimed as if in one voice.

"We'll take 'em over where we left ours."

The four men were just going to take the horses when Wild exclaimed:

"Stop right where you are! Hold up your hands, you scoundrels!"

Though they had been looking for the dashing young deadshot, they were much surprised when they found him. But they were desperate fellows, for they no doubt realized that if Young Wild West was not put out of the way they would be apt to be hanged for what they had done.

Crack!

One of them fired in the direction the command came from.

The bullet missed Wild and struck a tree.

Crack!

The shot was answered by our hero.

He did not miss.

Down went the scoundrel, and then away dashed the other three for their lives.

Crack, crack, crack!

They fired at random as they ran.

Crack!

Charlie drew bead on one of them and brought him down.

That only left two of them besides the leader.

Jake was one of the survivors.

He led the way for the old house.

In they dashed, and not until they reached the room where they had left Gabe Glenn in did they stop.

When they saw he was not there they looked blankly at each other.

Jake saw that the other door was open, and he stepped over and found the room empty.

"Gabe has gone, an' so has ther gal!" he exclaimed. "Come, Boyd, I reckon we'd better mount an' git out of this here vicinity."

The man called Boyd nodded, and then out they went.

CHAPTER XII.

CONCLUSION.

Isaac Rubenstein did not know whether to get mad or laugh when he found how the Chinaman had swindled him.

"Vot you call id, huh?" he asked.

"Cards allee samee goodee," Hop answered in his childish, innocent way.

"Dey vos all queens."

"Velly stlange."

"Vell, I should say dot vos strange! It vos no vonder dot you vos vin my fifteen tollar!"

Hop took the pack from him and calmly thrust them in his pocket.

The peddler concluded to let it go as it was, but he devoted himself to thinking up something that would enable him to get square with the Chinaman.

Darkness came on a few minutes later, and they were forced to proceed slowly.

They kept at it for two hours and then the jeweler declared that he was hungry.

"You gottee somet'ing to eat?" Hop asked him.

"I vos hafe a chunk of der ox vot vos roasted mit der pranding pee," was the reply.

"We stop and eatee, len."

They brought the horses to a halt right on the trail our friends had gone over on their way to the old ranch-house.

The meat was brought out by Rubenstein, but it was very rare, and in a cold state he declared that he could not eat it.

"Me makee lillee fire and cookee meat," the Chinaman said.

Hop got a hustle on him and soon had a pile of dry fagots blazing.

There was a brook near at hand, so they had water both for themselves and their animals.

Hop spitted the chunk of meat, which was quite a large one, and began broiling it.

"Whattee takee meat for?" he asked, looking at the peddler curiously.

"I vos t'ink I vos eat it for mine supper if Young Vild Vest not ask me to stop mit Buckhorn Ranch and have mine supper," was the reply.

Hop grinned.

The meat was soon done, and then they ate it and washed it down with water from the brook.

"Now we likee havee lillee dlink of tanglefoot," remarked Hop, as he took a black cigar from one of his mysterious pockets and lighted it. "Len me go and lookee for Missy Alietta."

"Vell, I vos guess dot ve hafe a little visky," answered the jeweler with a broad grin. "I vos always carry some of dot stuff in case of sickness."

Hop looked surprised and pleased as well.

Then Hop produced another cigar and they sat down to enjoy themselves for a little while.

They had just finished the bottle, without the jeweler having thought of a way to win his money back, when they were startled to their feet by hearing the sounds made by approaching horses.

"Young Wild West comee back, so be," said Hop.

He pulled his big revolver and got ready for fight, in case it should be enemies who were coming.

Isaac Rubenstein quickly got into the wagon, ready to drive off in a hurry.

The next minute two horsemen galloped up and came to a halt.

They were no others than the two cowpunchers who had left the old house when they found that Gabe Glenn and his fair captive were no longer there.

The fire was still burning, so the villains had seen who were there.

They were not afraid of the jeweler and Chinaman, so they stopped.

"What are you galoots doin' here?" Jake asked.

"We comee lookee for Missy Alietta," Hop answered, smiling blandly. "You see her an' Young Wild West?"

"Young Wild West is dead, an' ther gal is gone!" spoke up the man Jake had called Boyd.

Hop shook his head.

"Young Wild West no dead!" he exclaimed. "He no flaid of um cowpunchers; he shootee putty quick, allee samee jackeelabbits!"

"You're putty soon fur a Chinee," said Jake, who had not seen Hop perform his wonderful trick at the branding bee; "you've got ter die, that's what you have!"

He pulled his shooter from his belt and was about to let Hop have a bullet when——

Crack!

Rubenstein had been holding his little pistol behind him all the time, and he did not hesitate to shoot at the villain.

And he proved to be a much better marksman than when he was shooting at the bottle, for the bullet hit the cowpuncher in the arm and made him utter a howl and drop his weapon.

Then Hop got out his revolver.

He covered the other man so quickly that he had no time to get the drop on him.

"Me guessee badee cowpunchers better behavee," the Chinaman said in his peculiar way. "Holdee uppee hands, or me shootee allee samee Young Wild West!"

Jake could only hold up one of his hands, but he got that up quick enough.

Boyd obeyed, too.

It occured to him that any one who could perform such wonderful feats of magic as he had seen Hop do that afternoon might be able to shoot pretty straight.

Rubenstein got down from the wagon and relieved him of his weapons.

Then he asked Hop for a cord to tie them up.

"Young Vild Vest vill vant dem already," he observed in a business-like way.

"Yes, lat light," nodded Hop, and then he quickly produced the necessary cords to do the job.

The two men did not attempt to get away, for a wonder. They had been desperate but a short time before, when

they started from the old house, but now they were very meek and docile.

Rubenstein and Hop had hardly got the two men tied securely when they heard more horses coming.

Gabe Glenn was riding that way, and he was being pursued by Young Wild West.

Our friends heard the two cowpunchers as they rode away, as a matter of course.

When Wild saw that they were going back by the way they had come he told his partners to wait a minute.

"We want to find Gabe Glenn first," he said.

The others had not been gone more than ten minutes when they found him.

The half-crazed cowpuncher had been hiding in the ruins, and he had just made up his mind to ride back to Buckhorn Ranch and kill young Wild West and then recapture the girl he wanted for his bride.

If he had been perfectly sane just then he would have gone somewhere to get out of the way of our hero forever.

But as it was, he wanted to win out or die.

He found his horse and rode out toward the trail.

The moment our friends saw him they got ready to follow.

"There are other horses over there," said Wild. "Go and get one for Arietta, so we will be able to catch up to that galoot."

The horse was soon found and then they set out homeward.

Young Wild West was in no particular hurry to overtake the villains who had gone ahead. Something told him that they would surely catch them, and he was willing to let it go at that.

It was not more than half an hour before they caught the sound of a running horse ahead of them.

"I guess it will soon be over now," said Wild, as he took the lead. "I want that fellow alive if I can get him."

He let the sorrel out, and, like a meteor, he bore down on the cowpuncher.

Though it was in the dark, the dashing young deadshot meant to catch him with his lariat if it were any way possible.

Just as he was getting ready to swing the lariat he rounded a turn and came in sight of a campfire.

And, much to his surprise, he saw Hop Wah and the peddler there.

Glenn had dashed right up to the spot where the Chinaman and Rubenstein were before he knew it.

He now turned to get away.

But knowing that Young Wild West was right behind him, he must have decided to have one more attempt upon his life.

He raised his revolver as his horse swung around.

Crack!

It was not he who fired.

Hop Wah had seen that it was Young Wild West the villain was about to shoot at and he fired just in time. The bullet hit the horse behind the left foreshoulder and the animal fell dead to the ground, throwing the rider over his head.

Hop bounded forward to catch the villain before he could get up, but he was not quick enough.

Glenn uttered a shriek like that of a wounded beast, and, drawing a knife, sprang to meet the Chinaman.

Crack!

Wild saw it was the only way to save the faithful Chinaman's life, so he fired to kill.

The bullet caught Glenn between the eyes and he rolled over without so much as a groan.

As our hero dismounted and saw the scoundrel Jake bound and sitting on the ground, he said calmly:

"That was Gabe Glenn's wedding. I told you the minister he would have would be a bullet, and that his bride would be Death!"

Arietta, Jim and Charlie rode up, and when they saw the buckboard and those who had come in it they were surprised.

But the situation was soon made plain to them.

Hop told his story, not forgetting to mention how he had fooled the peddler and won fifteen dollars of him.

The Chinaman's little story put a spicy touch to the whole adventure, and in spite of the peril she had been through, Arietta laughed with the rest.

There is little more to tell.

Suffice it to say that the two prisoners were taken to Buckhorn Ranch, and the next day they were turned over to the sheriff.

The sheriff wanted to arrest the rest of the cowpunchers who had been present at the branding bee, but Wild declared that the ones who had put up the fight against him were enough.

Only two of them lived, as it was, and if they were sent up for life it would be a fitting punishment for them.

But they were not sent up for life.

The cowboys belonging to Buckhorn Ranch somehow persuaded the sheriff to let them have the prisoners for a few minutes, and a little later they were found hanging to a tree. Rubenstein continued his travels.

And that ended "Young Wild West's Branding Bee" and Arietta's adventure with the cowpunchers.

Next week's issue will contain "YOUNG WILD WEST AND HIS PARTNER'S PILE, AND HOW ARIETTA SAVED IT."

SPECIAL NOTICE

Please give your newsdealer a standing order for your weekly copy of "WILD WEST WEEKLY." The War Industries Board has asked all publishers to save waste. Newsdealers must, therefore, be informed if you intend to get a copy of this weekly every week, so they will know how many copies to order from us.

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HELP YOUR COUNTRY!

A DAILY DUTY.

Each day every American soldier in France is confronted by a great duty. Our Army there has a great task to perform for our country, for the world, for civilization, and for humanity. Our soldiers are doing their duty with a courage and fidelity and efficiency that thrill every heart.

Each day every American citizen at home is confronted by a great duty, a duty as imperative upon him or her as the duty of our soldiers is upon them. The American people have a great task to perform. It is to support to the limit of their ability our Army, our Navy, our country at war.

To work with increased energy and efficiency so that our national production may be increased; to economize in consumption so that more material and labor and transportation may be left free for the uses of the Government; and with the resultant savings to support the Government financially is the daily duty of every American. It is a duty that will be met by every American whose heart is with our soldiers in France, who glories in their courage and fighting ability and their success.

STOP THE GRUMBLING.

"Some dissatisfaction has been caused by the late orders concerning the consumption of sugar," says the Omaha World-Herald, "but the discontented must remember that the Food Administration is not to blame. They should direct their criticism at the German junkers and not at the administration. The shortage of sugar has been caused largely by the U-boats. There is plenty of sugar in the world, but the lack of shipping and the sinking of sugar cargoes have caused all the trouble."

The writer then goes on to say that the sacrifice the people are called on to make is comparatively small and that in a few months the likelihood is that the need for it will pass.

"Meanwhile," he continues, "let the grumblers think of the boys who are giving all for their country, who are enduring cheerfully the sum of all hardships and danger, and then look at himself in the mirror when he complains of being deprived of the second spoonful of sugar for his coffee. One look should be enough."

NO EXTRA SUGAR AND FLOUR ALLOTMENTS FOR FAIRS.

Displays of pies and cakes at county and State fairs this year will of necessity be prepared from the individual allotments of sugar and flour; no extra allowance will be given any housewife or baker for this purpose.

This announcement was made by Dr. Harry Barnard, Federal Food Administrator for Indiana, incident to the statement that judges on all food exhibits have been requested to judge every such display with special reference to a strict conformity to the Federal food regulations. Dr. Barnard says that county food administrators have been urged to get in touch with fair officials with a view to preventing loss of any kind of food that may be brought in for exhibit. It is the hope of the Food Administration that there will be an absolute minimum wastage of wheat flour and sugar through this medium this year.

CHICKEN FEET MAKE GOOD SOUP.

Some time ago the Butcher's Advocate directed the attention of the trade to the food value of chicken feet. A recent clipping from an Illinois paper is of interest in this connection:

"That chicken feet make wonderful soup is very well known to the chefs serving our large hotels, exclusive clubs, etc., but the average town and city housewife is blissfully ignorant of the fact.

"Here is something which every dealer—whether in a large market or in a small town—can take up in an educational way by passing the word out among his customers and asking them to tell others not to throw away chicken feet, but to clean them properly and make soup. Almost any woman who has the suggestion ought to know how to proceed; but if not, she may find out by referring to a cook book.

A former student at an Eastern agricultural college tells of an episode concerning chicken feet a few years ago.

"It seems that a French professor at a nearby university who was getting fresh fowls from the school farm asked this student what became of the feet of the chickens being served at the professor's home.

" 'Why, we throw them away, professor,' replied the astonished young poulterer.

" 'Now, then, I wish you to save all the feet for me in the future,' said the professor.

"Whereupon the student took a separate package of feet with the next fowl, and the professor, upon looking over the collection, kept the feet and let the student take the fowl to someone else. That opened a new source of revenue for the young man—marketing for actual money what would otherwise be wasted."

LOST IN THE SAHARA DESERT

—OR—

THE PLUCK AND LUCK OF A BOY EXPLORER

By DICK ELLISON

(A SERIAL STORY)

CHAPTER XX (Continued).

They threw him down, and tore from him the net, and began to remove his garments and weapons. But by this time, much of his vigor, and all of his resolution, had returned.

He knew that his ammunition was waterproof, and that probably these savages were practically unfamiliar with modern firearms. At least so he judged by seeing among them only the spears, knives, arrows, and war-clubs, of the remoter tribes in this wild region.

One tall negro, in striving to tear off Leo's khaki coat, he pushed violently back. But the fellow's hand had caught a cord inside that now gave way.

Something fell to the ground and flew open. But, without noticing this, the boy leaped back, seized one of his revolvers, and pulled the trigger twice to see if it was in working order. It was, for two shots rang out, and two balls went up in the air.

One went through the roof; the other punctured a rudely painted disk, set high up on a sort of altar, This disk was the color of fire. One might have thought it a crude attempt to paint a sun, or a full moon, in reddish, yellow ochre.

The disk toppled and fell down upon a small real fire burning on a lower platform or altar beneath.

At this cries of rage and alarm rose on every side. The echo of the shots at first seemed to terrify those who had begun to despoil our hero. But when the disk fell into the fire it looked as if Leo would be torn to pieces. A dozen furious men fell on him, and one oro two priest-like figures, with long hair and infuriated faces, urged on the others.

Then the same white, womanly form entered the room. She pushed into their midst as one who is master and would quell strife amid a pack of unruly dogs. She stamped her foot, frowned at them, and talked vigorously in an unknown tongue.

They gave way before this queen or princess. Even the piests or medicine men slunk aside.

"Restore this stranger his possessions," was what she seemed to say.

While this was being done, Leo—much amazed—saw one of the priests pick up the object which had fallen to the ground, without his having noted aught but that they were very rough and rude.

The medicine man was about to restore this when his eye fell on the open frame. It was a pocket miniature of an elderly man of a wise, benevolent, yet determined cast of feature.

Leo saw the look of astonishment in the priest's face, and it led him to notice the object itself.

"Here—you!" exclaimed Jerome, forgetting himself. "Give that up."

The priest gave Leo back the picture, with a gesture of grateful submission; then spoke of the white woman.

"How came you here, with this face in this picture?" she demanded, turning to Leo and speaking good English, though with a French accent.

"I brought it from my home in America. Why not? May I have it back?"

In her presence, and under the strange feeling that came over the boy, on hearing her all at once speak to him in his own tongue, Leo's fear and anger gave way.

"You brought it from your house—here?" she asked. "Why?"

"I came to this country to try to find the man whose face they appear to be surprised. Do they know him? Do you?"

"These people, who are now my people, want to know what you know of this good man, who did them so much good when he was here among them a few years ago."

"What do I know of him!" Leo smiled. "He is my father. I have come five thousand miles to try and find out where he is, and if he be dead or alive."

"You—son of the great explorer? When M. Jerome was here last the smallpox was carrying off these, my people, by the hundred. They are sun-worshipers, and their anger just now was because you insulted their deity by tumbling its image into the sacred fire."

"Who—I? I was only trying my pistol to see if they would shoot after the wetting you gave me in that net. I thought I might need them to defend myself."

"Well, it is good that my influence is strong with them. It is better, if you are a son of M. Jerome, for this people look on him as one who saved the life of the tribe. He was a good doctor, and vaccinated them as Livingstone did the Congo tribes. When I explain all this to them they will do anything for you in their power."

"But why did you have them take me in so rough a way?"

"While I am their ruler, my life is lonely. We saw you, and the temptation to make you prisoner came over me. There are other tribes near me who highly prize white captives. In fact, I heard, not long back, that some of our people had seized a white girl. I hope not, for she may give me trouble."

"Then you don't dislike being a sort of queen or priestess?" Leo thought of Lelia when he asked the question.

"I cannot get back to my own country, and here I have life made very pleasant. But while we talk my people wonder. Let me explain to them what our talk means, to them and to us."

This she did, and though Leo did not understand her language, he was impressed with a sense of her magnetic power and attractiveness.

These simple-minded savages were now eager to restore to Leo not only all his belongings, but to make him comfortable and dry and warm. They made him a feast outside, and took him from the house of their sun deity. Only one thing of his they seemed to covet, and that was the picture of Leo's father. For him and his saving deeds they had the picture of Leo's father. For him and his saving deeds they had the same love and reverence that the Congo tribes retained for the English medical missionary, Dr. Livingstone, who gave up his life for them, and now lies in Westminster Abbey, where the greatest Britons are buried.

"Tell them," said Leo to the woman, "I can give this picture only to those who will help me find my father, if he is alive."

"It is said he was last seen among other tribes further on among the islands and on the mainland."

"I am one of a strong war party who will search this lake," said Leo. "But you have not yet told me your name."

"Here I am called the Princess Oneeola. This tribe always have some white woman for a sort of queen. If this other girl is fairer than I she may make trouble. But I hope those have her who make strangers their slaves; then we will not have her here."

"But what was your name back in your own home, for you came from among civilized white people. I guess you are French?"

"From Algiers—yes. And as a child from France. I was last in Tripoli, five years back——"

"Do tell me your name!" uged Leo excitedly. "Did you ever hear of any Delbruls there?"

To young Jerome's further surprise, this regal looking girl became much agitated. She looked wildly about at the staring natives; then seized Leo's hand in one of hers.

"For the love of truth, young man, come with me, where we can be more private."

And she half led and half dragged the wondering young stranger inside one of the smaller hut.

CHAPTER XXI.

WHO IS QUEEN ONEEOLA?

The hut was fitted up in a rude way better than such native huts usually are, and bore certain signs of womanly refinement that Leo at once noticed.

But she thrust him down on a seat covered with a lion skin.

"What do you know of the name of Delbrul?" she hoarsely demanded.

"You said you were last from Tripoli. So am I. The girl who was stolen below Bedwaren, and who may be the one you spoke of, is Lelia Dedbrul, daughter of the consul there——"

"M. Charles Delbrul. I knew him—too well I knew him!" she interrupted, and her face darkened with anger. "He parted me from his oldest son, who wished to marry me—me! But who are you that I should say these things in your presence?"

"Well, I happen to be traveling with that same oldest son Lucien, and we are here searching Lake Tchad. He for his kidnaped sister, and I for my father."

"M. Lucien in your party—M. Lucien Delbrul, of Tripoli?"

"Yes; but for a long time sub-consul at Ghrat, until we were lately driven from there by the new Turkish governor, who wanted this sister for his own harem. The father favored this match, Miss Lelia Delbrul did not, and fled to Nalu, and later joined my party and came with me to Ghrat. But when Al-Siddra got there he ousted us all. Lucien had a caravan, and south we all came. When Lelia was stolen he put his caravan in charge of his steward. We formed this war party, and bought lake boats. Had you not netted me instead of a fish, I would be with Lucien now. But he and the rest will follow—never fear."

"M. Lucien—my Lucien!" She wheeled on him, and her eyes glowed. Tell me, sir. Is—is M. Lucien married—yet?"

"N-no. He is only anxious to find and save his sister."

"You have been much with him lately. Did he never say why he and his father parted, and he finally went away?"

"No. But Miss Lelia, who is about the finest girl I know, told me that it was about some former sweetheart. When she came back it was all over, and Lucien soon went to Ghrat, where he made money trading, being helped by his position as sub-consul. But, as I said, Al-Siddra's arrival and his power as the new sheikh forced Lucien to leave in order to save his sister from that vile old Turk. And now, won't you be more willing to help us find our lost ones? You must also know that Charles Delbrul is a distant relation of my mother, wife of this lost man whom these people think is so good."

(To be continued.)

CURRENT NEWS

PLACES STARVING SHEEP.

Frank Stevens, of Grand Rapids, has placed 600 half starved sheep, brought from a region in New Mexico where no rain has fallen for two years, on his farm east of Albion, Mich.

WOMEN AND CHILDREN EARN GOOD MONEY

J. Ragsdale, who operates a digitalis dryer on the Alsea River, Oregon, recently said there has been a big demand for his product, but is experiencing difficulty in filling orders on account of the scarcity of pickers. Mr. Ragsdale uses a hop dryer and has exploded the idea that the leaves of digitalis must be dried slowly in the shade.

The whole coast region is covered with the herb and in the Alsea region women and children are making from $3 to $5 per day. One woman recently earned $3.45 in three and one-half hours gathering the leaves.

ST. PATRICK'S BIRTHPLACE.

There is no other great saint in the Catholic hagiology about whom so much uncertainty exists. It is not even known whether March 17 is the date of his death or of his birth, though it is sometimes said to be both. The year and the place of his nativity are matters of dispute. Indeed, so many conflicting legends have been woven into his story that it is now generally assumed there were two or more St. Patricks who have been rolled into one.

According to the best authorities this Patrick was born about A.D. 386 in the village of Nemphthur, just outside of Glastonbury, England. His father was a decurion, or town councilor. The favorite legend, however, makes him a native of Tours, in France, and a nephew of St. Martin. From the Confession itself we learn that in his sixteenth year he was carried away by pirates and taken to the north of Ireland, where he was sold as a slave.

WALNUT POLLEN CAUSES HAY FEVER.

According to Prof. H. M. Hall, of the University of California, "the prevalent assumption that the tree pollens play only a minor role, if any, as causative factors in hay fever must now be abandoned, since one species alone has been demonstrated to be the cause of hundreds if not indeed thousands of cases in California." The tree in question is the California black walnut, much used as a shade tree in certain towns of the Sacramento valley. Hay fever of the spring type is very prevalent in this region and coincides in time of occurrence with the sifting down of abundant pollen from the black walnut. The treatment of numerous hay-fever subjects to render them immune to hay fever has been undertaken, serums prepared from black walnut pollen being the ones most used. Professor Hall suggests investigation of the relation of black walnut to hay fever in the Eastern States.

WOMEN KNIT IN JAIL.

Knitting for the soldiers and sailors of the country has been adopted as a pastime by women prisoners of the county jail at San Diego, Cal. So proficient have the women become in this that the sweaters, socks and helmets turned in to the Red Cross by them are said to be the most perfectly knitted of any of the garments received by the San Diego and Coronado chapters.

Under the patient tutelage of Mother Chambers, the matron of the jail, the women of the ward have taken so enthusiastically to this work that now when the Red Cross chapters have rush orders it is frequently this little band of knitters who save the day with the required number of articles properly made. Recently when the Coronado chapter had a rush order for 200 trench caps the women of the jail made thirty-four in record time and made it possible for the order to be filled.

VANADIUM AND THE LONG RANGE GERMAN GUNS.

An analysis of fragments of the shells fired at Paris by the German long-range guns has shown that the walls of the projectiles contain a considerable proportion of vanadium, and speculation has been aroused as to the source from which Germany obtains this metal. Some vanadium is produced in Sweden, but it was thought that any importations from that country were consumed in the manufacture of steel for submarines. It is estimated that the Peruvian mines supplied more than three-quarters of the metal which reached the world's markets before the war, and none of this is known to have reached Germany by direct shipment since the commencement of the rigid blockade.

American steelmakers think that when preparing for the war Germany laid in large stocks of vanadium. The point which interests them particularly is the ability of the German shellmakers to make use of the alloy for a special purpose after nearly four years of war. Either the accumulated stock was much greater than was believed in 1914, or imports by secret channels have kept the supply abreast of the heavy demand. When the submarine "Deutschland" left New York on her second trip home it was rumored that a large consignment of vanadium was aboard, and that in both trips the undersea cargo-carrier took back 25,000 pounds of the metal.

INTERESTING ARTICLES

BABOON GUARDS AUTO.

Lieut. Harry Mellon, called to a downtown corner in Pittsburgh, Pa., to take possession of an automobile thought abandoned, encountered a large bald-headed baboon that was chained to the car and came out a loser.

With a wild sweep of his long arms the animal scratched the policeman and tore his clothes. Mellon saving himself from further injury by jumping. An auto patrol was called and the car, with the baboon was hauled to the station house. Later the owner appeared and explained that he chained his pet baboon in the car as protection against auto thieves. Mellon is certain nobody will steal the car.

"TUCKAHOE" MAINTAINS HER RECORD.

A new fast pace for coastwise commerce has been set by the speed ship "Tuckahoe." The famous collier, which was built in the record breaking time of 37 days, in the first month of her active service ending on Friday, June 21, has taken four cargoes of coal from Norfolk and Baltimore to Boston. These four cargoes have totalled approximately 19,000 tons. Two round trips a month have been the average performances of steamers engaged in the New England coal carrying trade. The fastest round trip of the "Tuckahoe" has been seven days, as against the average time of 14½ days. The slowest round trip of the "Tuckahoe" has been 12 days, and this was due to a change of her crew in Boston, delaying her four days in port.

STEALING EGGS.

Four hundred and fifty dozen eggs were stolen from a building at the home of Harry C. Harner, a huskster, near Emmitsburg, Md. A chest containing 100 pounds of butter and several coops of chickens and ducks were overlooked. The eggs were hauled away in an automobile truck. When Mr. Harner went to ship his eggs he found the lock on the door broken and all the crates were missing. Footprints of different size about the building indicated that several persons committed the robbery. Wheel prints of the truck were traced to the State road leading to Gettysburg.

This is the fourth egg robbery that has occurred in that locality. Thieves made three visits to the workhouse of the Blue Ribbon Company and stole 150 dozen the first time, 750 dozen the second time and 360 dozen the last time, all within two years.

A NEW WEAPON.

The use of the South American bolas in a highly up-to-date form for the purpose of bringing down enemy aircraft is suggested by H. Gernsback in the Electrical Experimenter.

A shell is fitted out so that after it has travelled a certain distance of its flight four strands of piano wires are thrown out, at the ends of which are weights and bombs. As the whole contraption was given a whirling motion by the rifling of the cannon and was travelling spinning, these four arms will constitute a rapidly revolving system, and if they ever come into contact with an aeroplane it will be an aeroplane less in the sky.

This idea, as stated, is on the principle of the South American bola, which consists of two leaden balls on the ends of a rope, which when thrown swing around rapidly and tangle up around the legs of any creature in the vicinity. Of the same sort was the chain shot of old naval days, two cannon balls attached to a chain. When discharged they would go whirling into the rigging of a ship and play general havoc.

IMPROVING OPTICAL GLASS.

As an example of the attention that is now being given in this country to the improvement of optical glass, it may be stated that more than two-thirds of the scientific staff of the Carnegie Geophysical Laboratory, in Washington, are now at work in various well known glass factories in different parts of the country. The Bureau of Standard has also been investigating optical glass and has recently erected a new kiln house with eight melting furnaces and suitable molding and testing equipment. A well-known chemical authority has recently declared that not only a better but a greater variety of optical glass is now made in this country, after about ten months of experiments, than is made in Germany, which formerly monopolized the industry.

ARMY FOND OF PRUNES.

The prune has a most important place on the Army bill of fare, says a War Department announcement. This place has been won by merit, for it has been proven that the prune has food value, fruit value, tonic value, and value as a confection. It has the high approval of the food experts in the subsistence division of the Quartermaster Corps, and what is more, it has been recommended by the Surgeon-General of the Amy.

Out of the 1917 crop the Army used 20,000,000 pound of prunes. Based on size 55, this amounted to 1,100,000,000 prunes. In order that the Army may have its prune supply the requirements for a year are figured out in advance prior to the time the new crop is ready for harvest. This avoids delay in making shipments and assures the Army of getting the size of prunes most suitable for its use.

FROM ALL POINTS

DEAD RATTLER FOR COLLEGE.

A large rattlesnake killed within one-half mile of the town of Brownsville, Linn County, Oregon, has been presented to the science department of the University of Oregon by O. V. White, superintendent of the Brownsville schools. Mr. White killed the snake last month. He was walking with a boy when he found the reptile sunning itself on a small hill. The snake is forty-two inches in length and about three inches through the thickest part of the body.

THE DEEPEST LAKE.

A lake known as the Great Sunken Lake is reported to be the deepest lake in this country, and perhaps in the whole world.

Located in the valley of the Cascade Mountains, about seventy miles north of Jacksonville, Ore., this lake, which is about fifteen miles long and four miles wide, is so deep that its depth cannot be measured.

It is situated so far below the crest of the mountains that winds cannot reach it and its surface is like a sheet of glass. It is sometimes called the "Lake of Mytsery."

FINDING BONES EXPLAINED.

The caves on the Maricopa Indian Reservation twenty miles from Phoenix, Ariz., in which a score of well-clothed skeletons were found recently, were declared by a coroner's jury to-day to be the burial places of Papago Indians who had died on the reservation many years ago.

The finding was reported after Coroner Charles D. Wheeler had interrogated some of the older Maricopas, who said that the Papagoans came from Southern Arizona and Northern Mexico many years ago to work and the bodies of those who died were placed in the caves. The clothing on the skeletons bore the marks of Philadelphia and Chicago manufacturers.

OVERALLS FOR GIRLS.

Wearing of overalls on the streets of Bloomington, Ind., by working girls has been indorsed by the City Council at a meeting attended by several hundred citizens and working girls.

Some time ago a number of the members of the local branch of the Women's Christian Temperance Union started an agitation to stop the girls wearing overalls on the streets and they asked the City Council to pass and ordinance against the girls going to and from their work in men's clothes.

Most of the girls who wear the overalls are employed at the Showers Brothers' Furniture Company factory. Speeches were made by W. E. Showers, general manager, and Charles Sears, superintendent of the concern, and by Miss Hazel Grey in behalf of the uniform for working girls.

MAN WHO TORPEDOED LUSITANIA IS DEAD.

Lieutenant Commander Schwieger, who commanded the submarine which sank the Lusitania, is dead. His death occurred in September, 1917, but has only been admitted by the German Admiralty, according to reports received in London.

Last September Schwieger, in command of the U-88, was in the Bight of Heligoland with another submarine. Both U-boats submerged, and the other commander felt a chain sweeping along the side of his boat, and believed he had run into an unknown British mine field. A terrific explosion under water followed. The second boat rose rapidly, and signalled for the other. There was no reply. A vain watch was kept for the U-88, and she has not been heard from since. There is little doubt, the reports say, that she sank.

TWELVE ALASKA MINERS LIVED THREE WEEKS ON MOSS.

Twelve mining men of the Goodnews Bay District of Alaska, after living on reindeer moss for several weeks on the bleak shore of Bering Sea, were rescued from starvation by officers of the power schooner Bender Brothers, which has just completed an eventful voyage to ice-bound northern waters. The men were weak from lack of food and had been driven from their camps in the interior, where the winter was the most severe in twenty years.

Nearly one hundred natives of the Kuskokwim River District have died of starvation, according to officers of the Bender Brothers.

As a result of the long winter, which set in much earlier than in previous years, the natives, especially those near Apakok, died rapidly. They had laid in only the usual amount of fish, which was exhausted long before the ice in Kushokwim Bay began to move eastward. When the Bender Brothers finally fought her way through the great ice floes and was able to discharge her supplies, consigned for the Goodnews Bay District, supplies in that locality had been exhausted.

Officers of the vessel said that they heard that six mining men died of starvation during the winter, but were unable to confirm the rumor.

The Bender Brothers was two months making the voyage from Seattle to Goodnews Bay and return.

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

HAWAIIAN LEPERS INVEST $12,000 WITH UNCLE SAM.

Inmates of the leper settlement at Kalaupapa, Molokai, purchased approximately $12,000 worth of War Savings and Thrift Stamps during July, or about $17 per capita. The cash sales for the Hawaiian Islands during the month, the returns from the Island of Kauai incomplete, amounted to $386,882.67. Sales from January 1 to July 1 totalled $436,762.61, making the grand total to August 1 $823,645.28.

PLANNED TRIP IN TRUNK.

Private Fred Jones, 25, of Oklahoma, was turned over the other day to the Camp Dix authorities by the Trenton police as a deserter. He is said to have escaped from the guard house at the cantonment and to have planned to be shipped from Trenton to Philadelphia in a trunk. The police say he made all arrangements for his trunk tour at 1446 North Olden avenue, where they arrested him.

The police say Jones's wife is a German and objects to her husband fighting against Germany. This was his second escape from Camp Dix.

INDIAN WAR VICTIM.

The first native Arizonian to lose his life in France was an Indian, Matthew R. Rivers, better known in Phoenix, Ariz., as Matthew Juan, who was killed.

He was a native Pima Indian and enlisted in a Texas unit. He was known in California as "Lucky Slim," where he was a baseball pitcher of more than local reputation. He was educated at the Sherman Institute at Riverside, Cal., and was a survivor of the Tuscania sinking en route to France.

Many native Arizona Indians have enlisted in the army and navy here. A majority expressed preference for the navy, although many of them had lived all their lives on the desert and had never seen the ocean until they enlisted.

OLD MAN CITIZEN.

Peter Von Der Yacht, seventy-eight years old, of No. 400 Bates Avenue, St. Paul, Minn., a veteran of the Civil War and a native of Holland, was made a citizen of the United States before Judge Kelly the other day in District Court.

He asked for naturalization on the strength of an honorable discharge from the United States Army, obtained after serving with the Twelfth United States Infantry through the Civil War. His application was granted by Judge Kelly.

"If it was not for the color of your hair," said the court, "I would ask you whether you would be willing to fight for the United States even against Queen Wilhemina, but I won't do that now."

Mr. Von Der Yacht has lived in the United States seventy-two years, coming to this country with his father, Cornelius Von Der Yacht, in 1846.

THE SUGAR WASTE IN COFFEE AND TEA.

The following bulletin was among the most forceful and effective bits of conservation propaganda at the New York Food Show last month. It was put out by the National Sugar Refining Co. of New Jersey.

"Save the waste!

"100 million cups coffee used daily in United States.

"70 million cups tea used daily in United States.

"170 million cups tea and coffee.

"If even an average of half a teaspoonful of sugar per cup is left undissolved at the bottom of cups of tea and coffee, the waste would be 1,700,000 pounds of sugar daily!

"Stir your sugar until it dissolves! It's estimated that one-third to one-half of all sugars used in homes is used in tea and coffee. Think it over—how is it in your home? Isn't there a chance for saving?"

ABOUT THUGS.

Once upon a time there was a large and highly organized community in India who lived by assassination and robbery. They were educated to it from their infancy; they followed it as a profession, and it was also their religion. They were called Thugs. Their method was to disguise themselves as pilgrims or travelers or merchants and to join with parties of pilgrims, travelers and merchants moving about India. They got into the confidence of their victims, found out what they had on them, and in due time—after weeks or months of acquaintance—they killed them by giving them poisoned foods, sweetmeats for choice, or by strangling them from behind, as they sat over the fire of an evening, with a knotted towel or a specially prepared piece of rope. They then stripped the corpse of all valuables, threw it down a well or buried it, and went on to the next job.

At last things got so bad that the Government of India had to interfere. Like all governments, it created a department—the Department of Thuggee—to deal with the situation. Unlike most departments, this department worked well, and after many years of tracking down and hanging up the actual murderers, and imprisoning their spies and confederates, it put an end to the whole business of Thuggee.

WILD WEST WEEKLY.

NEW YORK, OCTOBER 4, 1918.

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GOOD CURRENT NEWS ARTICLES

While digging a grave the other afternoon in a cemetery at Nazareth, Pa., Bernard Unger slipped, fell into it and broke a leg. He is in the Easton Hospital.

Mrs. S. A. Snyder, Findlay, Ohio, has received a letter from her son, Francis, who is with the Rainbow Division in France, that he has been wounded, not seriously. According to the letter, Snyder was carrying a horseshoe when a hand grenade exploded, killing two of his comrades and four Huns, after glancing off his nose.

Jacob Von Vain, a farmer, is in a serious condition at his home near Montgomery City, Mo., as a result of being attacked by an angry bull. When the enraged animal rushed at him, Von Vain did not have time to escape. He seized an iron ring in the bull's nose and clung to it while the animal attempted to shake him off and stamp and gore him. The farmer's hold finally was broken just as help arrived, but he had been bruised severely.

Miss Ethel Kellogg, fifteen years old, of Ephata, Wash., was bitten on the face and arms by a mad coyote. The animal was running through the barnyard after chickens. When the girl attempted to drive him away the coyote immediately gave up the chase and turned on her, and before her father could come to her rescue had inflicted several serious wounds on her face and arms. She was taken to Seattle, where she could receive Pasteur treatment.

The Marine Corps has begun the enrollment of women for clerical duty. They will be placed on the Reserve list and will be called as needed to relieve the enlisted men who have been performing this class of work. It is expected that several hundred women qualified as stenographers, accountants and typewriters will be accepted and they will be enrolled as privates and promoted to non-commissioned rank when their efficiency has been demonstrated. The women thus enrolled will be entitled to the same allotments and insurance privileges as are given to the enlisted men of the Marine Corps and uniforms will be provided. The uniform has not been fully determined upon, but is under discussion. The ages at which women will be accepted will be from eighteen to forty.

GRINS AND CHUCKLES

A clergyman was recently telling a marvelous story, when his little girl said: "Now, pa, is that really true, or is it just preaching?"

Arthur—Come, now, Gwennie; are you going to marry me, or to make a fool of me? Gwennie—Probably both, my dear Arthur.

Rybolt—What do you call good weather, anyway? Tightwad—The kind that makes a man's wife prefer her own home to a trip downtown.

"Can I have a piece of pie, mother?" "Say 'may I,' Johnny, not 'can I.' ". "Well, mother, may I have a piece of pie?" "No, Johnny, you can't."

"I don't know whether I killed Cholly or not." "What do you mean?" "He proposed to me a little while ago and said he couldn't live without me—and I refused him."

Cholly—Yaas, if any girl should wefuse me, it would bweak me all up. Miss Sharpe—But, then, you're so simple it would be easy to put you together again.

"Shorry I'm sho late, m' dear," began Tippels, apologetically, "but shome fresh jokers stopped me an' wouldn't lemme go——" "Indeed?" interrupted his wife. "Why didn't you take the brick out of your hat and hit them with it?"

Mrs. Lazenbee—Here's the man come to fix our clock. Go upstairs and get it for him, won't you? Mr. Lazenbee—Certainly. Where did you think it was? Mrs. Lazenbee—I thought it had run down.

Bobby looked askance at the piece of cake given him at supper. "What is it, son?" asked his father. "'Tain't fair," said Bobby, "for grandma to cut my slice, 'cause everything looks bigger through her spectacles."

Jokeley—I see our friend Woodby Riter is the author of something really interesting at last. Cokeley—Indeed? I haven't seen it. Jokeley—Of course not; it only arrived last night; but I believe the doctor says it's one of the finest boys he ever saw.

THE FALLING MINE.

By Paul Braddon

Below the croppings of the Gould and Curry Mine a great cave occurred in 1877.

Luckily, ample warning had been given by the settling of the ground within the mine and the snapping and splintering of timbers; therefore no lives were lost in the cave.

News of the great crash in the mine spread rapidly through the town, and all what heard of the accident gave a sigh of relief when told that all of the miners escaped uninjured.

The full extent of the cave, and the damage done thereby in the interior of the mine, were not known for some time, but from the cavity formed on the surface were judged to be very great. I called upon Superintendent Bonner to learn the particulars.

"I have not been in the mine for three or four hours, and therefore am unable to give an exact account of the present condition of the caved portions. However, if you will venture with me," said Mr. Bonner, "we will go in as far as possible, and see how things look."

Having agreed to Mr. Bonner's proposition, two lanterns were procured, and we soon found ourselves on the level where the greatest damage had been done.

Nowhere was to be seen the friendly twinkle of either lamp or candle; all was dark as the caves of the Cimmeri, save where the light of our lanterns fell upon the walls of the tunnel along which we were advancing, or where the rays streamed far ahead and were reflected back by points of polished pyrites or bright quartz crystals.

At first, too, all was silent as the tomb, but as we moved forward the sharp snap of falling timbers or the dull boom of a heavy fall of earth reached our ears.

These sounds constantly grew more distinct.

Soon was heard a sort of running fire of short little snaps from the bent and splintering timbers, with ever and anon a startling musket-like report, as some large timber was broken in twain or was rent asunder.

We were now fast nearing the scene of the cave. As yet the ground above us was sound, and all the timbers stood intact in their places.

Our advance was slow and cautiously made.

At times some unusual commotion caused us to halt and listen half a minute, with bodies inclined forward and eyes strained, to penetrate beyond the light thrown by our lanterns. Few words passed between us.

"Wait a bit," or "Now let us move on," from Mr. Bonner, were about all that was said.

Presently we came to a drift leading from the tunnel we had been traversing.

The snapping and grinding sounds were now more distinctly heard.

"It is in this direction," said Mr. Bonner, leading the way into the drift.

We had not proceeded far before we came to where the timbers of the drift were badly bent and displaced. We were in a spot where the ground was settling. A kind of ticking noise came from the logging overhead and along the sides of the drift, and dirt sifted down on our hats.

Soon we reached a place where the posts on the sides of the drift were bent like bows.

The backs of these bows projected into the drift, and were full of splinters, some of which formed—snapped out—before our eyes. Shortly we came upon two posts bent out from opposite sides of the drift till their backs were not more than a foot apart.

"This looks bad," said Bonner.

"Very. Let us go back."

"It cannot be far to the edge of the cave. We want to see that. Suppose we venture? Timbers are still strong when they snap."

"Then move on," said I, but our legs wanted to go the other way.

In passing between the two bent posts it was necessary to turn our bodies edgewise. All about us the timbers were working and groaning, but still stood some distance apart.

At the end of the drift we came into a large open space, what seemed a long and broad chamber, and, turning westward across this, we were soon as near the edge of the cave as it was thought prudent to venture.

Holding our lanterns above our heads, we saw before us a black and yawning pit or chasm. The light of the lanterns failed to show us either the top or the bottom of this pit, nor could we see across to the further side. It seemed to have neither top nor bottom—seemed but a shapeless, boundless region of darkness.

In this frightful pit there fell every half minute, from somewhere in the darkness high above, great masses of earth and rock.

At times, judging from the thunderous sounds, hundreds of tons tumbled at once from the roof and sides of the chasm.

Smaller masses were almost constantly dropping in some direction, while the splintering, snapping, and groaning of timbers in all directions were something frightful.

Suddenly, as we stood quaking in the midst of the tremendous commotion, a great mass of rock and earth fell from some place high up on the wall on our side of the shoreless sea of darkness, almost grazing the brink of the chasm before us.

With the fall of the mass came a rush of wind that nearly extinguished the candles in our lanterns. Elevating his light and grazing upward, Mr. Bonner cried: "Fall back, fall back! the roof is giving way."

Almost as he spoke a mass of several tons fell from the roof of our chamber not ten feet in front of us, and, in falling, took a large bit out of the edge of our floor.

"Quick, quick, this way! We must get out of this!" cried Bonner.

We ran back to the drift by which we had entered. The two posts between which we had squeezed had closed together.

"Back, back!" cried Bonner. "This way. I know a drift. Quick, we may reach it!"

Back along the drift we darted, amid sounds never to be forgotten, and such as have seldom stunned mortal ears. All about us was in motion—all rapidly sinking.

Bonner led the way across the chamber. In a corner, on the east side, the light of his lantern showed the mouth of a drift, toward which he was hastening.

Scarcely was there time to observe this before he held up his lantern, crying, "Back, back!" and with a rumbling crash the mouth of the drift closed and the ground before and about began to disappear.

"Quick!" cried Bonner, grasping our arms and hurrying us along. "To the drift again. It is our only chance to escape."

Into the drift we once more darted. Squeezing our way through the cracked posts, we reached the place where we had before been stopped. Though crushed together in the middle, there was still a small open space between the posts at the bottom.

Throwing himself flat on the floor of the drift, Bonner pushed his lantern through the opening, then, by a mighty effort, pushed through after it. He seemed an hour in passing, though he probably wriggled through in less than ten seconds. Our fear that he would stick fast was agonizing.

"Quick! Give me your hands! Leave your lantern!" shouted Bonner, the moment he was through.

Instantly we were down, and had both hands through the opening. In about two seconds we were hauled through as a hunter pulls a squirrel out of its skin. A short dash took us to the main tunnel, and as we gained it Bonner fervently exclaimed:

"Look! Look! There she goes!" and, as he spoke, down went the shattered portion of the drift, breaking away to within fifteen feet of where we were standing.

INCREASED CAMP FACILITIES.

Preparations are being made for accommodations to take care of approximately 200,000 additional men in a number of the larger camps and cantonments. The facilities that the five Infantry Replacement Camps, the two Field Artillery Replacement Camps, and the Machine Gun Training Camp and Replacement Base, as well as housing facilities at the three Field Artillery Training Centers, are to be materially enlarged. Permanent hospitals and storehouses will be erected at each of the camps, while at some of them tents will be provided for the added increment of troops. The added facilities at the training camps will be utilized to a large extent to accommodate the Officers' Training Schools, which will be continuously conducted at the camps. The Artillery Training Center at Fayetteville, N. C., is one of the new camps intended to be a permanent station. The new Infantry School of Arms, which will be located at Columbus, Ga., is expected to provide quarters for about 25,000 men.

Camp Hancock, Ga., is to be a machine gun center and will be enlarged to accommodate between 55,000 and 60,000 men. The Officers' Training School now housed in tents at this point will be provided for in barracks and quarters similar to those already erected at other cantonments. The improvements for this purpose will cost about $2,000,000. This figure does not cover the increased cost for other construction that will be necessary to care for the increased number of men to be located at this camp. It has been decided to make Camp Grant an Infantry Replacement Camp to accommodate between 55,000 and 60,000 men. The present capacity of this camp is about 42,000. The alterations and additions made necessary by this change will be made after the division now located there is moved. The three Field Artillery firing centers are to be located at West Point, Ky.; Camp Jackson, S. C., and Fayetteville, N. C. It is planned to locate six brigades at Fayetteville, six at West Point and four at Jackson. It has also been decided to erect permanent buildings for the Officers' Training Schools at present housed in tents at Camps Lee, Gordon and Pike. These schools have a capacity of about 6,000 men. The estimated cost of erecting barracks and quarters and doing other construction work at each of these schools is about $2,000,000. Some of the contracts for these improvements have been let and the additions are under way. The others will be pushed ahead with the characteristic speed which has typified the construction work on the former cantonments, and before the winter season arrives there will be ample living quarters as well as hospital facilities for the men brought together under the new draft and assigned to these cantonments.

OUR FIRST POWDER MILL.

The first important gunpowder factory in America was established on the Brandywine River, near Wilmington, Del., in 1802, by Eleuthere Irene du Pont de Nemours, a Frenchman, who was born in Paris 147 years ago. As a boy he was placed in the royal mines of Essonnes to acquire a practical knowledge of the manufacture of gunpowder. He remained there until the outbreak of the French Revolution. He came to America in 1799, and, discovering that only the poorest quality of gunpowder was made in the United States, he decided to enter the industry on this side of the Atlantic. In 1801 he revisited the Essonnes mills to procure plans, models and machinery, and with these he opened his first powder works on the Brandywine. His infant industry was the beginning of a great one, and ever since that time the Dupont family has been prominent in the explosives industry in the United States

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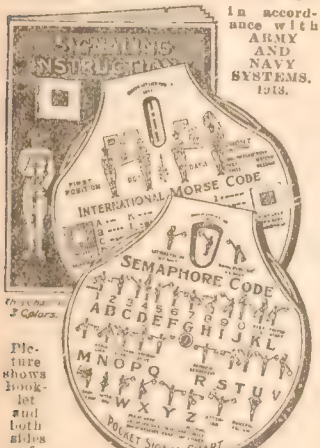

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You may eat and drink all you need. There is no tedious exercising. Take a little oil of korein at mealtimes and when retiring; also follow the simple, clear directions. A loss of weight, ten to sixty pounds (whatever you need to lose), may be expected by this safe and pleasant system of fat reduction. At the druggist's get a small box of oil of korein capsules, and start at once. Be of normal size, with good figure and attractive appearance, agile, quick-witted, healthier and more efficient. By reducing weight now you are likely to avoid one or more diseases, heart weakness, sunstroke, apoplexy, etc., and to add years to your life.

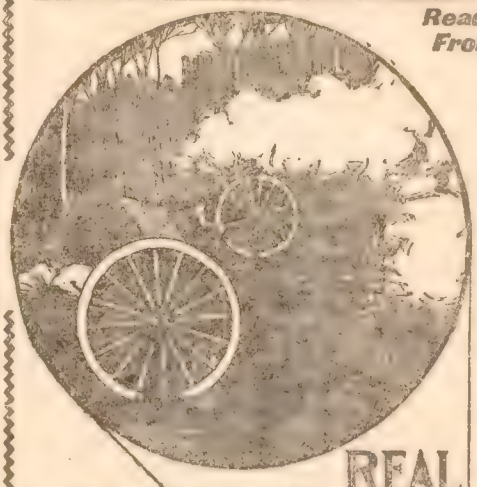
FREE SHORTHAND LESSON

This is wonderful news. It is absolutely true that you can learn the complete K. I. shorthand system in a few hours; then acquire speed in taking down dictation, speeches, 'phone messages, etc., even when a person speaks rapidly. To prove it, send for free lesson to King Institute, EA-108, Station F, New York, N. Y. You'll astonish and delight yourself by improving your efficiency and earning power. Learn in spare moments at home or while riding in car. Trifling expense; untold benefit.

COME TO THE "MOVIES"

At My House—To-night

50,000 Boys Made Happy



REAL MOVING PICTURES

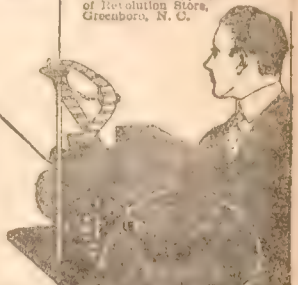
A Real Moving Picture Show in Your Own Home

Remember, this is a Genuine Moving Picture Machine and the motion pictures are clear, sharp and distinct.

The Moving Picture Machine is finely constructed, and carefully put together by skilled workmen. It is made of Russian Metal, has a beautiful finish, and is operated by a finely constructed mechanism, consisting of an eight wheel movement, etc. The projecting lenses are carefully ground and adjusted, triple polished, standard double extra reflector, throwing a ray of light many feet, and enlarging the picture on the screen up to three or four feet in area. The light is produced by a safety carbide generator, such as is used on the largest automobiles. This throws a dazzling white light of 600 candle-power on the screen.

It is not a toy; it is a solidly constructed and durable Moving Picture Machine. The mechanism is exceedingly simple and is readily operated by the most inexperienced. The pictures shown by this marvelous Moving Picture Machine are not the common, crude and lifeless Magic Lantern variety, but are life-like photographic reproductions of actual scenes, places and people, which never tire its audiences. This Moving Picture Machine has caused a rousing enthusiasm wherever it is used.

This Moving Picture Machine which I want to send you FREE, gives clear and life-like Moving Pictures as are shown at any regular Moving Picture show. It flashes moving pictures on the sheet before you. This Machine and Box of Film are FREE—absolutely free to every boy in this land who wants to write for an Outfit, free to girls and free to older people. Read MY OFFER below, which shows you how to get this Marvelous Machine.



Read These Letters From Happy Boys:

Shows Clear Pictures

I have been very slow in sending you an answer. I received my Moving Picture Machine a few weeks ago and I think it is a dandy, and it shows the pictures clear just as you said it would. I am very proud of it. I thank you very much for it and I am glad to have it. I gave an entertainment two days after I got it. Leopold Lamontagne, 54 Summer Ave., Central Falls, R. I.

Sold His for $10.00 and Ordered Another

Some time ago I got one of your Machines and I am very much pleased with it. After working it for about a month I sold it for $10.00 to a friend of mine. He has it and entertains his family nightly. I have now decided to get another one of your machines. Michael Ebereth, Maudan, N. Dak.

Would Not Give Away for $25.00

My Moving Picture Machine is a good one and I would not give it away for $20.00. It's the best machine I ever had and I wish everybody could have one. Addie Bresky, Jeanesville, Pa. Box 84.

Better Than a $12.00 Machine

I am glow[illegible] in my thanks to you, but my Moving Picture Machine is [illegible] have had it a [illegible] it has not been broken yet. I have seen $12.00 machines that would not swap mine for it. Robert Finebenty, care of Revolution Store, Greenboro, N. C.

How You Can Get This Great Moving Picture Machine—Read My Wonderful Offer to You

HERE IS what you are to do in order to get this amazing Moving Picture Machine and the real Moving Pictures: Send your name and address—that is all. Write name and address very plainly. Mail to-day. As soon as I receive it I will mail you 20 of the most beautiful premium pictures you ever saw—all brilliant and shimmering colors. These pictures are printed in many colors and among the titles are such subjects as *"Betsy Ross Making the First American Flag"*—*"Washington at Home,"*—*"Battle of Lake Erie,"* etc. I want you to distribute these premium pictures on a special 30-cent offer among the people you know. When you have distributed the 20 premium pictures on my liberal offer you will have collected $6.00. Send the $6.00 to me and I will immediately send you FREE the Moving Picture Machine with complete Outfit and the Box of Film.

50,000 of these machines have made 50,000 boys happy. Answer at once. Be the first in your town to get one.

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d Street, Dept. 14, New York

PLEASE USE COUPON

Free Coupon

Good for Moving Picture Offer

Simply cut out this Free Coupon, pin it to a sheet of paper, mail it to me with your name and address written plainly, and I will send you the 20 Pictures at once. Address

M. CROFTON, Secy.,
615 W. 43d St., Dept. 14, New York

LITTLE ADS

Write to Scott & Scott, Inc., Advertising Offices, 144 East 32nd Street, New York City, or 29 East Madison Street, Chicago, for particulars about advertising in this magazine.

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MEET YOUR RESPONSIBILITY. New developments. Make efficiency count. Our wonder working Salesmanship and Efficiency course helped 25,000 last year to better their positions. It will help you. Write to-day. Knox School of Salesmanship and Business Efficiency, Engineers Bldg., Cleveland, O.

BOYS, Organize local military companies. Train to drill, march, parade; army tactics. Be a leader among your companions. None too young. Great fun. Send 25 cts. for treatise. R. S. Crosley, Military Instructor, 824 Wabash Ave., Terre Haute, Ind.

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100,000 ADVERTISING QUESTIONS ANSWERED in Mahin's Advertising Data Book. Fits vest pocket, 260 pages. Contains 5 fundamental tests to apply to every ad or letter which represents you. Sent on 5 days' free trial. John Lee Mahin, 1 E. 39th St., N. Y. City.

THE OOLOGIST IS THE ONLY PUBLICATION in America devoted to the interest of those making collections of eggs of North American birds. Its columns are filled with advertisements from parties desiring to exchange such specimens, also each issue contains many interesting articles and notes on the birds that the Boy Scout sees in his tramps and camps in the woods. Subscription 50 cts. per year. Sample copy free. Address Oologist, Lacon, Ill.

100,000 BOOKS, including many rare, curious, fascinating editions. Secret societies, all details exposed, including Freemasonry, K. T., I. O. O. F., K. O. P., Grange, Elks; clairvoyancy, hypnotism, sex, science, unexpurgated classics, etc. Catalog, 10 cts. McCarthy's Big Book Emporium, 219 So. Dearborn St., Chicago.

BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

$2 BUYS 100 SHARES. Also options for 30 days 100 shares at same price. 2 Producing Wells. Others drilling. Dividends guaranteed by National Bank Certificate of Deposit. Agents wanted. Money Back Oil Co., 713 Foster Bldg., Denver, Colo.

$1 DOES IT. Get our bank references. Investigate us—that's all we ask. $1 few months gets Warranty Deed to land; interest in co-operative well; participation in entire subdivision earnings. May pay $200 or more monthly. Maps, reports, established facts free. Address Sourlake Texas Oil Co., 317 De Menil, St. Louis, Mo.

COINS AND STAMPS

STAMPS: 105 mixed, incl. China, etc., 2 cts.; Album (500 pictures), 3 cts. Bullard, No. 20, Sta. A, Boston, Mass.

FREE—8 different Canada War Stamps to approval applicants. R. H. Robinson, Winnipeg, Manitoba.

50,000 COINS, medals, bills, Indian curios, firearms, daggers, spears, antiques. Catalog free. Collectors' Exchange, Dept. 18, 1336 Willington St., Philadelphia.

STAMPS—53 all different, Transvaal, Turkey, Brazil, Peru, Cuba, Mexico, Ceylon, Java, etc., and Album 10 cents; 1,000 finely mixed, 20 cents; 65 different U. S., 25 cents; 1,000 hinges, 3 cents. Agts. wtd. 50%. Bargain list free! I also buy stamps; send what you have. C. Stegman, 5042 Cote Brilliante Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

FREE—5 unused French Colony stamps to approval applicants. Edwin H. Bailey, (S.S.) Farmingdale, N. Y.

100 ALL DIFF., incl. Cuba, Peru, Egypt, Greece; perforated gauge, album. Only 10 cts. Offer always good. C. M. Gibbs, S-8922 Juniper St., Los Angeles, Cal.

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DETECTIVES MAKE BIG MONEY! Travel and see the country. We instruct you at nominal cost. Either sex. Write for free booklet. American School of Criminology, Dept. M, Detroit, Mich.

FOR THE HEALTH

REDUCE WEIGHT HAPPILY. If you are too fat, send for interesting book telling the best way to become slender, healthier and beautiful. Sent in plain envelope. Korein Company, NB-601, Sta. F, New York.

TOBACCO HABIT. If smoking is affecting your heart or if it is weakening your eyes, conquer tobacco habit now and avoid early death or blindness, a fate that has befallen many others. Quit without drugs and improve health wonderfully. MacLevy's method is highly praised. If cured you pay us only $1. If not cured, costs you not a cent. Write for it to-day. Albro Society, AA-601, Station F, New York.

MORPHINE AND LIQUOR habits successfully cured at home. Send stamp for booklet of information. Dr. Quayle's Sanitarium, Madison, Ohio.

SEX PHILOSOPHY. Ten reasons for sexual trouble in men and how to relieve in 48 hours; sent sealed for stamp. Retailers Co., Toledo, Ill.

HELP WANTED

U. S. GOVERNMENT wants help. Men, women, 18 or over. War preparations compelling thousands appointments. $100 month. Easy clerical work. Short hours. Vacations with pay. Common education sufficient. Write immediately for list and description of positions. Franklin Institute, Dept. P-103, Rochester, N. Y.

THOUSANDS MEN-WOMEN, 18 or over, wanted immediately, U. S. Government war positions, $100 month. Easy clerical work. Write immediately for free list of positions open. Franklin Institute, Dept. P 155, Rochester, N. Y.

FIREMEN, BRAKEMEN, BAGGAGEMEN, $140-$200 monthly. Colored Porters, by railroads everywhere. Experience unnecessary. 881 Ry. Bureau, E. St. Louis, Ill.

$5.00 A DAY GATHERING EVERGREENS, roots and herbs. Ginseng, $14 lb., Belladonna Seed, $64 lb., or grow it yourself. Book and war prices free. Botanical, 66, New Haven, Conn.

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ST-STU-T-T-TERING and stammering cured at home. Instructive booklet free. Walter McDonnell, 15 Potomac Bank Building, Washington, D. C.

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WANTED TO BUY typewriters, any make. Give description. M. M. Seide, 142 E. 32d St., New York.

WE BUY old gold, diamonds, watches, platinum, silver, jewelry. We will pay up to $35 per set for discarded false teeth (broken or not). Cash sent at once—goods held 5 to 15 days and returned at our expense if offer is refused. Certificate granted us from State of Wisconsin. Absolutely responsible, liberal and reliable. Address: United States Smelting Works, Inc., 401 Goldsmith Bldg., Opp. P. O., Milwaukee, Wis.

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PRESIDENTIAL PUZZLE. Most fascinating, instructive and interesting; complete in neat box, 25 cents, postpaid. O. S. Michel, Box 293, Newark, N. J.

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WHEN DO FISH BITE BEST? The Old Fisherman's Calendar tells when. Go on the right days. Send 25 cts. to-day to O. F. Calendar, Box 946 H, Sta. Springfield, Mass.

YOU CAN MAKE GOOD, durable paints and varnish 15 cents gallon. Write for details. Emmelmann Bros. Manufacturing Co., Dept. J, Indianapolis, Ind.

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BIG MAIL. Want to receive it? Send only 6 cts. stamps. Astonishing. A. A. Henry, Louetta, Tex.

I am going to give this regular, gasoline propelled, motor driven automobile to some boy or girl just for spending a little spare time among neighbors and friends. Runs 6 miles per hour, holds two people, especially built and designed for boys and girls. It looks like a $3000.00 racing automobile, has up-to-date wire wheels, non-skid tires, powerful gasoline engine, runs 60 miles on a gallon of gasoline, it will take you quickly and safely everywhere. I also give dozens of other prizes. Hurry—write quick—at once and I will send you my easy plan for earning this $100.00 automobile and other grand prizes.

Don't send any money but rush your Name and Address quick

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If you can comb your hair, you can cut it with our "Wonder" long or short just like any barber. The same way to remove hair from under arms, face, neck or limbs. Chocolate rain adds. Ladies can cut the children's hair at home. Will shave the neck or the face like any razor and lasts a lifetime. Every time you cut your hair and shave, you save its cost. 50c Postpaid.
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We have a New Method that cures Asthma, and we want you to try it at our expense. No matter whether your case is of long-standing or recent development, whether it is present as Hay Fever or chronic Asthma, you should send for a free trial of our method. No matter in what climate you live, no matter what your age or occupation, if you are troubled with asthma, our method should relieve you promptly.

We especially want to send it to those apparently hopeless cases, where all forms of inhalers douches, opium preparations, fumes, "patent smokes," etc., have failed. We want to show everyone at our own expense, that this new method is designed to end all difficult breathing, all wheezing, and all those terrible paroxysms at once and for all time.

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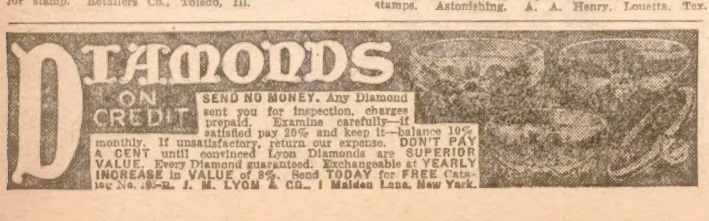
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SEND NO MONEY. Any Diamond sent you for inspection, charges prepaid. Examine carefully—if satisfied pay 20% and keep it—balance 10% monthly. If unsatisfactory, return our expense. DON'T PAY A CENT until convinced Lyon Diamonds are SUPERIOR VALUE. Every Diamond guaranteed. Exchangeable at YEARLY INCREASE in VALUE of 8%. Send TODAY for FREE Catalog No. 185-R. J. M. LYON & CO., 1 Maiden Lane, New York.

To Men who are Bald or are Losing Their Hair

Let me tell you of my own case.

I was almost completely bald, and as I had tried many tonics, lotions, etc., without benefit, I expected to remain bald for the rest of my life.

But instead of baldness, I now have a complete growth of hair upon my head. This is all the more remarkable because I am 66 years old.

The way that I obtained a perfect hair growth was as simple as it was astonishing to me.

While traveling I met an old Cherokee Indian who gave me a pomade or ointment to use upon my scalp. Although my confidence was meager, I used this compound. He told me it contained selected components from the Three Kingdoms of Nature.

After several applications my looking-glass revealed a slight fuzz. This developed from day to day to a healthy growth of hair. Imagine my satisfaction in being able actually to brush the hair where there had been a bare scalp! Yet it was true. Soon I was able to comb it—and I have been able to do so ever since.

I traded with the old Indian savant, obtaining the recipe. It was crude and the ointment was almost nauseating. So I had it modernized, by a practical chemist, holding to the original principle, and now from the recipe a cosmetic pomade is prepared. Men and women have used it—and many are now doing so. In numerous cases remarkable results are being reported.

This ointment contains no alcohol nor anything else that has a tendency to dry the hair, the scalp or the roots.

The way for you to prove what it will do for you is to try it. I will mail you the recipe free of charge. Your own physician will tell you that it is safe and you may obtain a supply from the druggist. Or you may get it from me. It is called Kotalko. A proof box will be mailed, with the recipe, if you send 25 cents, silver or stamps, to John Hart Brittain, 150 East Thirty-second St., BE-103, New York, N. Y. This is a genuine announcement devoid of the lavish phraseology of the usual advertisements, but it means exactly what it says, and I, being a business man of good reputation, stand ready to prove it to you.

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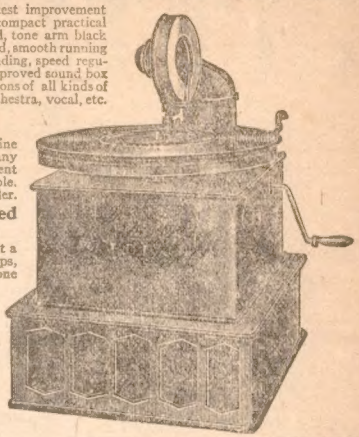
Here is our New Style E. D. L. Phonograph—the latest improvement—without the horn. The lightest, most durable and compact practical phonograph ever produced. It is beautifully finished, tone arm black japanned, nickel winding crank, accurately constructed, smooth running spring motor, which plays 2 to 3 records at one winding, speed regulator, stop lever and felt-covered turn table. New improved sound box with mica diaphragm, which make perfect reproductions of all kinds of music—band pieces, talking pieces, instrumental, orchestra, vocal, etc.



Plays Any Disc Record

Up to 7 inches, and plays them properly. This machine is simply wonderful—not to be compared with any other of this kind. Will give you more entertainment than anything you ever owned. Strong and durable. Small and compact with no parts to get out of order.

Every Machine Regulated and Tested before it leaves the factory

and guaranteed in every way. A real phonograph, not a toy, yet small and light enough to be carried to camps, excursions, etc. Gives a clearness and volume of tone not surpassed by most high-priced instruments.

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Just your name and we will send you 24 of our Art Pictures to dispose of on special offer at 25c each. Send us the $6 you collect and for your trouble we will send this new improved E. D. L. Phonograph and a selection of 6 records, free for your trouble. You can dispose of pictures and earn this great machine and the records in a few hours' time.

E. D. LIFE, 337 W. Madison St., 8T46 Chicago

YOU HAVE A BEAUTIFUL FACE

BUT YOUR NOSE?

IN THIS DAY and AGE attention to your appearance is an absolute necessity if you expect to make the most out of life. Not only should you wish to appear as attractive as possible, for your own self-satisfaction, which is alone well worth your efforts, but you will find the world in general judging you greatly. If not wholly, by your "looks," therefore it pays to "look your best" at all times.

Permit no one to see you looking otherwise; it will injure your welfare! Upon the impression you constantly make rests the failure or success of your life. Which is to be your ultimate destiny? My new "Nose-Shaper," "TRADOS" (Model 24), corrects now ill-shaped noses without operation, quickly, safely and permanently, is pleasant and does not interfere with one's daily occupation, being worn at night.

Write today for free booklet, which tells you how to correct ill-shaped noses without cost if not satisfactory.

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Secret Locket and Neck Chain Pendant and Neck Chain, imitation Wrist Watch with adjustable leather strap and buckle and these Four lovely Rings. ALL Given FREE to anyone for selling only 12 of our Jewelry Novelties at 10c each. Write to-day. Fresh from factory. Address:

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$100 PANTS MADE TO MEASURE

Not $1.00, not even 50c, not one cent cost to you under our easy conditions. No extra charges for fancy styles, belt loops, or bottoms, pearl buttons, all **FREE**. Before you buy a suit or pants, before you take another order, get our free samples and wonderful new offer. All other Agents write too. Ask for the big, new different tailoring deal. Costs nothing, write today. Address

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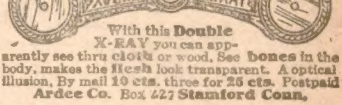
Folding DOUBLE X-RAY



With this **Double X-RAY** you can apparently see thru cloth or wood. See **bones** in the body, makes the **flesh** look transparent. A optical illusion. By mail **10 cts.** three for **25 cts.** Postpaid

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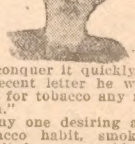
Get a small box of Oil of Korein (in capsules) at any drug store. Follow simple directions and reduce at least one pound, average, weekly under $100 guarantees. Absolutely wholesome; endorsed by physicians. The fat seems to melt away. By proper reduction you will make wonderful gain in physical and mental energy. Add years to your life. Remember Oil of Korein. Non-purgative; no thyroid. At the druggists'; or write for FREE BOOK to Korein Company, NG-103, Station F, New York City. Best method in the world to become slender quickly, safely, inexpensively—and stay thin. Every over-stout man or woman should lose weight and improve personally.

How He Quit Tobacco



This veteran, S. B. Lamphere, was addicted to the excessive use of tobacco for many years. He wanted to quit but needed something to help him.

He learned of a free book that tells about tobacco habit and how to conquer it quickly, easily and safely. In a recent letter he writes: "I have no desire for tobacco any more. I feel like a new man."

Any one desiring a copy of this book on tobacco habit, smoking and chewing can get it free, postpaid, by writing to Edward J. Woods, WV-103, Station F, New York City. You will be surprised and pleased. Look for quieter nerves, stronger heart, better digestion, improved eyesight, increased vigor, longer life and other advantages if you quit poisoning yourself.

STRICTURE TREATMENT Guaranteed

If suffering with Stricture, enlarged prostate, difficulty to retain or pass water, you can get immediate, entire, permanent relief by using

5KEEN'S PAINLESS REMEDY,

NO CUTTING, DILATING or DRUGGING!

Use Treatment 60 days. If not satisfied, will return your money. No chance to lose a penny. Our booklet, "AN HONEST TALK," with GUARANTEE, sent FREE! will open your eyes and convince.

The D. A. SKEEN CO., Dept. 32 P. O. Box 336, Cincinnati, O

REDUCE YOUR BUST

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Pay for an **AUTOMOBILE** on the instalment plan of **$10.00 down and $1.00 per month.** 25c brings full explanations with bulletin. We are Rebuilders.

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WILD WEST WEEKLY

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807 Young Wild West at Death Divide; or, Arietta's Great Fight.
808 Young Wild West and the Scarlet Seven; or, Arietta's Daring Leap.
809 Young Wild West's Mirror Shot; or Rattling the Renegades.
810 Young Wild West and the Greaser Gang; or, Arietta As a Spy.
811 Young Wild West Losing a Million; or, How Arietta Helped Him Out.
812 Young Wild West and the Railroad Robbers; or, Lively Work in Utah.
813 Young Wild West Corraling the Cowpunchers; or, Arietta's Swim for Life.
814 Young Wild West "Facing the Music"; or, The Mistake the Lynchers Made.
815 Young Wild West and "Montana Mose"; or, Arietta's Messenger of Death.
816 Young Wild West at Grizzly Gulch; or, The Shot That Saved the Camp.
817 Young Wild West On the Warpath; or, Arietta Among the Arapahoes.
818 Young Wild West and "Nebraska Nick"; or, The Cattle Thieves of the Platte.
819 Young Wild West and the Magic Mine; or, How Arietta Solved a Mystery.
820 Young Wild West as a Cavalry Scout; or, Saving the Settlers.
821 Young Wild West Beating the Bandits; or, Arietta's Best Shot.
822 Young Wild West and "Crazy Hawk"; or, The Redskin's Last Raid.
823 Young Wild West Chasing the Cowboys; or, Arietta the Lariat Queen.
824 Young Wild West and the Treacherous Trapper; or, Lost In the Great North Woods.
825 Young Wild West's Dash to Deadwood; or, Arietta and the Kidnappers.
826 Young Wild West's Silver Scoop; or, Cleaning Up a Hundred Thousand.
827 Young Wild West and the Oregon Outlaws; or, Arietta as a "Judge".
828 Young Wild West and "Mexican Matt"; or, Routing the Rawhide Rangers.
829 Young Wild West and the Comanche Queen; or, Arietta As An Archer.
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